



**CENSUS OF INDIA, 1951**

**Volume XII**

**ASSAM, MANIPUR AND TRIPURA**

**PART I-A**

**REPORT**









# CENSUS OF INDIA, 1951



Volume XII

## ASSAM, MANIPUR AND TRIPURA

PART I-A

REPORT

*By*

R. B. VAGHAIWALLA

*of the Indian Civil Service,*

*Superintendent of Census Operations*

*for*

*Assam, Manipur and Tripura*

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 1. Previous Censuses :

For the origin of the institution of the Census as we know it today, one need not go as far back as Kautilya, Asoka, Vikramaditya or the Moghul emperors; it will suffice to refer to the Census of 1872 which was the first in the series of decennial Censuses held in India. The 1951 Census, ninth in the decennial series and the first after the attainment by India of her rightful place in the comity of nations as a Sovereign Democratic Republic, was taken from 9th February, 1951, to 28th February, 1951. The first Census of Assam was held in 1872 when Assam was included in Bengal; in 1872 Assam was constituted a Chief Commissioner's province and remained as such until 1905 when it became merged in the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. During this period, three Censuses were held—1881, 1891 and 1901—and separate Census Reports for Assam were published for all these Censuses. In 1911, it was censused as a part of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, but as it again became a separate unit in the following year, a separate Report for Assam was published. The 6th Census was held on the 18th March, 1921, a few months after Assam had become a Governor's province under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1921. The 7th Census was taken on the 26th February, 1931. The Census of 1941 was the only census in Assam under the Provincial Autonomy introduced by the Government of India Act of 1935; the present Census is the first Census of Assam as a Part 'A' State in the Republic of India.

The census of Manipur has always been conducted along with that of Assam, but Tripura was placed in the charge of the Census Superintendent, Assam, instead of West Bengal, for the first time in Tripura's census history.

## 2. Volumes of the Report :

The Assam Census Report, which counts as Volume XII in the series of reports published by the Census of India, 1951, has 4 parts—Part I-A is the present Report proper; Part I-B contains all the Subsidiary Tables along with some additional ones which have been specially prepared by me. The main tables are included in Part II which is further subdivided into 2 parts, Part II-A containing General Population Tables, Summary Figures for Districts, Social and Cultural Tables and Tables of Land holdings of indigenous persons and Part II-B containing Economic Tables and Household and Age (Sample) Tables. In order to save the reader the trouble of constantly referring to Part I-B which contains the Subsidiary Tables, a number of inset tables, suitably summarising the former have been prepared for the present volume. Apart from these volumes, District Census Handbooks have been published giving the breakdown of all Census Tables by tracts within the districts. Finally there is an Administrative Report which gives a full and detailed account of the stages of census operations, from start to finish. It is, however, of little interest to the general reader, being primarily meant for the use of the next Census Superintendent and other officers who

will be entrusted with the details of the 1961 Census Operations. For the information of the general reader a brief account of how the Census Operations were conducted is given below.

### 3. Census Operations—Procedure :

After taking over charge of the office of Superintendent, Census Operations, Assam Manipur and Tripura on the 28th January, 1950, my first task was the preparation of a General Village Register containing an accurate and exhaustive list of all villages and the number of houses—both inhabited and uninhabited. This formed the basis for the second step, viz., the formation of Census Divisions (*e.g.*, Charges, Circles and Blocks) and the appointment of appropriate officers in charge of these Census Divisions, viz., Charge Superintendents, Supervisors and Enumerators. The whole State was divided into blocks and for each block an enumerator was appointed in charge of 100 to 250 houses. There was one supervisor in charge of a census circle consisting of 5 to 10 blocks, with 600 to 1,000 houses. Above the Supervisors were Charge Superintendents who were responsible for the census of their charges which might contain 10 to 15 circles with ordinarily 8,000 to 12,000 houses under them. In every sub-division the Charge Superintendents worked directly under the Sub-divisional Census Officer who was either the Sub-divisional Officer himself or his Election Officer, who was appointed *ex-officio* Sub-divisional Census Officer under the general control and supervision of the S.D.O. The Deputy Commissioner was in general control of the census operations for his whole district, with special responsibility for the operations in the sadar sub-division. In Manipur, the Deputy Commissioner was the District Census Officer, whereas in Tripura, the census was conducted directly under the Secretary, Home (Census) Department, Agartala, with the help of a Special Officer. The Charge Superintendents were appointed from touring officers of all departments, whose ordinary duties were likely to take them to their own charges. Enumerators were appointed from the land records staff, primary school teachers, etc., and Supervisors from the official superiors of the cadre from which Enumerators were selected. With the exception of a very few paid men in the hill areas, the entire census army worked without remuneration and more or less voluntarily, in addition to their own duties. Only men and officers of the Police Department were

exempted from census duty in view of the difficult law and order situation prevailing during the first half of 1950. Other claims for exemption were not infrequent. Here a sharp distinction was drawn between particular and general exemptions, the former were considered on their merits and the latter opposed as contrary to the principle of common effort, which is so important in an Indian Census. As far as possible a village was coterminous with the enumerator's block. For the whole of Assam, there were 354 Charge Superintendents, 2,699 Supervisors and 13,135 Enumerators; for Tripura their numbers respectively were 13, 122 and 622 and for Manipur 82, 349 and 930. Their first task was to thoroughly check and bring up to date the house-lists already prepared for the purpose of draft Electoral Rolls. House numbering having been already completed by paid enumerators appointed for the purpose of elections, Census staff was only to number the newly built houses or re-number those of which the numbers were effaced or missing. The following extracts from my Instructions to Enumerators and Census Handbook succinctly describe the actual enumeration procedure :—

“You should divide all people in your village into three broad classes given below and keep the slips for each class clearly separate from those of the other two by finishing completely the enumeration for the first class, then taking up the second and lastly the third, not by using separate pads for each class.

- (a) **‘Household population’** means the people who are normally found at the time of enumeration in their usual place of residence. This will include by far the large majority of population.
- (b) **‘Institutional population’** means only inmates of institutions like Hospitals, Jails, Barracks, Hotels, Hostels, Leper Asylums, **excluding their normally resident staff and semi-permanent boarders in boarding houses** (*vide* Appendix II of the Booklet).
- (c) **‘Houseless’ persons** mean persons like members of wandering tribes, beggars, boat-dwellers, tramps, wandering Sadhus, etc., who do not normally reside in houses.

The dates fixed for enumerating these three classes of people will automatically ensure that

the slips of each class are separate from those of the other two.

**Enumeration Dates:** Your enumeration work will last for 20 days from the 9th February, 1951, to 28th February, 1951. First finish the enumeration of household population including visitors present by 28th February, 1951. On 28th February 1951, take up and finish the enumeration of institutional population, treating the normally resident staff as household population. Lastly enumerate the houseless persons on the night preceding the sunrise of 1st March 1951."

(Para. 46, page 33, Census Handbook)

\* \* \*

"(i) Start filling up the pads in the order of houses as indicated in the house-list excepting institutions. (ii) For census purposes, a 'house' means a 'dwelling with a separate main entrance' and a 'household' means 'all persons including dependants and servants who live together and have common mess'. Thus in a house, say No. 20, there may be more households than one. You should separate each of them by writing 20-A, 20-B, etc. Households may consist of just one person also, *e.g.*, each of independent single persons in boarding houses; or as independent single persons residing with two other households A and B, say in the above house No. 20, but taking his food separately. His house No. will be 20-C.

(ii) Completely finish the enumeration of all the members of a household; then only go on to another household in the same or the next house mentioned in your house-list.

(iii) In each household enumerate all those who normally reside there.

(iv) Enumerate also the normal residents who are temporarily absent at the time of your visit if they will be back by 1st March, 1951. Do not enumerate those who left the house before the 9th February, 1951, and are expected to come back only after 1st March, 1951.

(v) Then enumerate visitors who will stay away from their own houses and remain in your Block throughout the 20-day enumeration period and who have not been enumerated anywhere else. Do not enumerate those who left their houses on or after 9th February, 1951, or are expected to return there before 1st March, 1951.

**Final Check:** From 1st to 3rd March, 1951, visit every house in your Block once again for final

check; fill in a slip for every new birth and cancel the slip for any death that took place before the sunrise of 1st March, 1951, since your last visit. If you happen to find any visitor in the household who had not been enumerated anywhere else during the whole period of enumeration, you should enumerate him also. During these days pay frequent visits to hotels, boarding houses and jails to see if any new visitor has arrived.

**Provisional Totals:** As soon as any pad is completed, note down the total population and displaced persons by sex and number of households on its back cover.

**Enumerator's Abstract:** On the 4th March, fill up the Enumerator's Abstract for your area and hand it over to your Supervisor with all the pads, used and unused." (Pages 6-7, Instructions to Enumerators).

In order to avoid double-counting or omission by over-sight, these instructions were amplified in the Census Handbook as follows:—

"In each household he will enumerate straight away all normal residents who are present; he will also enumerate all normal residents who are absent at the time of his visit but who will return to the house the same day or night from their work or recreation or casual visit getting all available data regarding them from the members present.

For normal residents who will be temporarily absent at the time of his visit for a longer period than one day, he will apply the following instructions strictly:—

(i) Enumerate him if he left the house on or after the 9th February, 1951. It does not matter if he is likely to return after 1st March, 1951.

(ii) Enumerate him if he is likely to return before the sunrise of 1st March, 1951. It does not matter if he left his house before 9th February, 1951.

(iii) Do not enumerate him if he left the house on or before 8th February, 1951, and is likely to remain absent beyond sunrise of 1st March, 1951.

(iv) Enumerate the absentee if he is likely to stay at the house any time between 9th February and sunrise of 1st March, 1951, and do not enumerate him if he will remain absent for the



entire enumeration period, *i.e.*, from 9th February till the sunrise of 1st March, 1951.

**Visitors :** Person whose normal residence or home is elsewhere but are found residing in other persons' houses at the time of enumeration will be regarded as visitors. Such visitors who will stay away from their own houses throughout the 20-day enumeration period and who have not been enumerated elsewhere, will be enumerated by the enumerator when they are found in his block. He will not enumerate those visitors who left their houses on or after 9th February, 1951, or are expected to return there before 1st March, 1951.

Before enumerating anybody the enumerator must invariably enquire whether he has already been enumerated elsewhere. And whenever he enumerates a person, he will invariably warn that person that he has been enumerated and that, if he goes elsewhere before the period of enumeration is over, he must not allow himself to be enumerated a second time by any other enumerator. If the person whom he is enumerating is not present at the time, the enumerator will make sure that this warning is conveyed to him by some other responsible member of the household. Thus the bulk of the population will be enumerated at the places where they are residing during the period of enumeration and the enumerator will have plenty of time in which to do his work and his Supervisor and the supervisory staff to check it. In order to make sure that no person is enumerated twice and no person is omitted from enumeration altogether, reliance has to be placed more than ever before on the co-operation of citizens and the vigilance of the enumerators and the supervisory staff. And it is therefore of the utmost importance that the Census staff should as early and as widely as possible instruct the public on the procedure of the census and secure their co-operation.

**Enumeration of Institutional Population :** The second main class of population, *viz.*, institutional, will be found mostly in towns. It will be very small, practically nil, in the village blocks. It should be clearly understood that while the members or inmates of such institutions are alone to be recorded as institutional the normally resident staff of these institutions is to be enumerated as household population under their own house numbers or under the house numbers of their respective institutions. There being a good

deal of changes and frequent coming and going among the personnel of institutional population, in order to avoid confusion and double counting it has been decided to enumerate this class of population simultaneously on February 28th, 1951.

**Enumeration of Houseless Population :** The third and last main class of population has been termed "houseless". In order to be sure of catching every one of such people, but of not catching him more than once, the only way to do is to hold a simultaneous enumeration of them and the best time is in the evening after dark. After the enumerator has completed his work amongst the household population and institutional population in his block by the evening of the 28th February, 1951, he will proceed to enumerate any of the houseless population that may be in his block during the night. The enumerator and the supervising staff must find out in advance where such people are most likely to be found. In enumerating wandering tribes and beggars, etc., the assistance of the local police officials may be taken; this will be arranged, when necessary by the District Officers who will be kept informed in advance by the Charge Superintendents for difficult or disturbed areas".

(Pages 34-36, Census Handbook)

**Training of Census Staff :** It could be seen straight away from the above extracts that the procedure at this Census was more complicated while the Census questions especially the economic ones more difficult than at any previous censuses. Hence great emphasis was placed on training the honorary census army. Not merely special emphasis was placed on oral instructions to be given on no less than 3 to 4 distinct occasions before the end of January, 1951, but in order to give the Supervisors a thorough idea of all the complexities of census procedure and questionnaire and to enable them to train their enumerators adequately, every Charge Superintendent was directed to select a convenient block or village at some central spot in his charge, collect all his Supervisors there and get the entire bulk enumerated by them, as well as by neighbouring enumerators, each doing a bit of enumeration work. This Test Enumeration was made compulsory for all plains area, to be completed on or before 15th December, 1950, a quota of 5 census pads of hundred slips each being allotted to each Charge Superintendent for this purpose. I personally checked a large number

of these Test Enumeration pads during my final enumeration tours. All District and Sub-divisional Census Officers were unanimous in proclaiming the utility of the Test Enumeration, but for which a lot of mistakes would certainly have crept in the census slips.

**Final stages of enumeration:** After the final check was completed on the 3rd March, 1951, the Enumerators met their Circle Supervisors on the morning of 4th March, prepared in his presence abstracts of the population of their blocks and handed them over to the Supervisors. The Supervisors thereafter prepared a circle summary which was handed over to the Charge Superintendents on or before 6th March. The latter then checked up the papers, made summaries for all the charges and submitted them to the District or Sub-divisional offices on or before the 8th March.

Finally, a district total was prepared and was telegraphed to me and the Registrar General, India. Each sub-division of a district also telegraphed its provisional total to me as soon as it was ready. From these returns, the provisional population of the State was totalled and published by 5th April, 1951. The provisional total population of Assam was 9,129,442, whereas the final population is 9,043,707. It means that the final population figure of Assam shows a decrease of 85,735, a difference of 0.94% from the provisional figure. This does not approach the accuracy of the provisional figures for Assam in 1931, which differed only by 0.181% from the final figures. It appears that the two small Frontier Tracts, Tirap and Abor Hills, were responsible for a large discrepancy of 33,895 out of the above total of 85,735. On a reference to Political Officers of these two areas, it was learnt that they had censused only 5,213 and 10,761 persons but reported their provisional figures as 28,700 and 21,169, respectively, because they had wrongly included some **estimated population** in their provisional figures. Gauhati sub-division was the greatest offender in this respect being responsible for a huge excess of 52,176 due to the wrong addition of one charge over again in its provisional figures. Thus, if the errors of judgment of the Political Officers, Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract, and the error in addition committed by Kamrup district alone are left out of account, the difference between the provisional and final totals for the rest of Assam falls to 336 only, i.e. 0.004%.

This microscopic difference clearly reveals the care and caution that attended the different stages of census operation in the rest of Assam, from the collection of enumeration slips prepared on the spot to their final stock-taking in the tabulation offices.

**Compilation and Tabulation:** In the mean time two offices were already started, one at Shillong and the other at Jorhat, for receiving the huge mass of census records, and tabulating the data collected on census slips. The records were all checked and arranged and the first process began of comparing the data on the census slips with those copied out in the National Register of Citizens (see below). At first under my direction, complete reconciliation and tally of the entries between slips and the National Register of Citizens was attempted; after completing this operation for nearly half the slips of the Shillong office, it was abandoned on the orders of the Registrar General, in the interest of economy of time and money, the check being confined only to comparison of important economic data and to the totals arrived at from the National Register of Citizens and the slips. I, however, departed from the All India instructions in one respect. When the population of a village was entered on the slips but the data not copied out in the National Register of Citizens either for the whole population or a part of it, a special staff of copyists was employed to complete the omitted work. Conversely, when entries in the National Register of Citizens were available of which the corresponding slips were not found, largely because the enumerator had attempted to do too much during the fag end of his census period of 20 days, slips were copied out from the data given in the National Register of Citizens. Thus, I was able to achieve a complete tally between the totals arrived at from the National Register of Citizens and those calculated from the slips and was exempted from the scheme devised by the Registrar General, of making a sample tally of the totals arrived at from the National Register of Citizens and those from the Primary Census Abstracts (i.e. the slips).

As all the data for individuals were already entered in the slips, there was no slip-copying process in this census, unlike the Census of 1931, in which the entries made against each individual in the census schedules were copied on to different slips. Thereafter came the sorting

stage, during which the slips which had been made up into convenient boxes, were sorted for the particulars required for the various Census Tables. Sorting for Shillong Region was finished under the able and energetic supervision of Shri N. Barkataki by the 15th September, 1951. The Jorhat Office, inspite of its late start by a month on account of the premature demise of the first Dy. Superintendent Shri Kshetradhar Burgohain, hastened to complete it by the 30th September, 1951. The final stage, viz. that of compilation and tabulation of the data was completed at Shillong by 21st October, 1951, whereas Jorhat completed it by 6th December, 1951, when Shri M. Ahmad handed over charge of his office.

After the tabulation and compilation were completed, and the work of State consolidation taken in hand in the Head Office, instructions were received from the Registrar General, India, to separate the data of the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and to treat them separately under the new district. This involved extensive changes in the existing tables of Cachar, Nowgong, Sibsagar and the United K. and J. Hills districts. The A series tables which were fully ready and already typed for despatch to the Registrar General had to be recast, taking nearly a month in the process, as certain information had to be procured from the Sub-divisional Officer, Jowai before they were finalized. This not only put back the submission of A series tables by nearly a month but also delayed the start of writing this report. In view of the fact that the new district had already come into existence on November 18, 1951, the extra trouble and delay were worth undertaking in order to bring the statistics and tables in line with the existing state of affairs.

**Cost of the 1951 Census:** The actual total expenditure on the Census of 1931 was approximately Rs. 190,000, there being no full compilation and tabulation work for the 1941 Census due to the war. This works out at Rs. 20-8-8 per thousand of the population for 1931. In the 1951 Census, the actual total cost was approximately Rs. 422,628 costing Rs. 47 per thousand of the population of Assam; for Manipur the figures are Rs. 1,333 and Rs. 13 per 1,000, while for Tripura, they are Rs. 16,542 and Rs. 26 per 1,000 persons.

#### 4. Salient Features of the 1951 Census :

Some important special features of the 1951 Census have already been briefly touched in the preceding paragraphs.

(i) The 1951 Census, the first in the Sovereign, Democratic Republic of India, has a new and added political and constitutional significance in our national life, which no previous census ever possessed. The constitution of India for the first time recognises its important role. Its articles 81 and 170 specifically provide that the data collected at successive censuses should form the basis for the delimitation of territorial constituencies and the basis for keeping these constituencies continually adjusted to the changed population figures. Census is now exclusively a Central subject, for which only the Parliament of India can legislate. In place of the earlier practice of having a new act every decade to authorise the taking of the census, we have now a permanent enactment on the statute book, viz., the Census Act, 1948 (Act XXXVII of 1948). This is coupled with another far-reaching innovation namely, the creation of a new permanent office of the Registrar General, who is the Census Commissioner for India with an *ex-officio* status in the Central Secretariat. These important steps will destroy the phoenix character of the Indian Census.

(ii) The 1951 Census has no particular pre-occupation with caste, community or religion, which are no longer its prominent features. In tune with the spirit of our new secular democracy, the present census does not record the caste or community of anyone **except** those who belong to the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the backward classes and the Anglo-Indians—these being the only classes specially recognised by the new Constitution of India and for which specific safeguards and provisions have been embodied in the Constitution. A battle royal on this point raged in the first Census Conference in February, 1950. As the Census Superintendents were sharply divided on the issue, the matter was settled at the highest level and a high policy decision was announced in the Parliament by the Government of India on the above lines.

(iii) **Census Questionnaire:** The Census questionnaire the world over cannot but have a strong family resemblance for such standard

questions as age, sex, civil condition, will always appear. Thus the 1951 Census questionnaire inevitably resembles its predecessors. Differences, however, are nonetheless considerable. The 1951 questionnaire contains practically all the questions suggested for international adoption by the Statistical Office of the United Nations in its "Population Census Handbook". Nay it includes some other questions which have a direct bearing on the present-day conditions, *e.g.* (1) Indian nationality, (2) Displaced Persons, questions inconceivable in the past censuses and which are simply due to the truly revolutionary changes in India's status during the last decade. There was no such thing as Indian nationality before 1947 when India was not independent, all citizens of India possessing only British nationality. August, 1947 saw the birth of the two new Dominions of India and Pakistan, the latter consisting of the predominantly Muslim areas of the Indian sub-continent. The independence of India and Pakistan were accompanied by the most gruesome incidents of mass butchery and atrocities in East and West Punjab, in East and West Bengal, Delhi and in some parts of U.P. These upheavals ultimately led to the uprooting of the Hindus and the Sikhs from West Punjab and their migration to East Punjab, followed by a reverse process of the uprooting of Muslims from East Punjab and the migration to West Punjab. Similarly, Sind was denuded of its Hindu population, receiving Muslim refugees from parts of Bombay and the State of Rajputana. Also mass migration of Hindus from East Bengal and Muslims from West Bengal occurred on the eastern frontiers of the two new States, both before and after their independence. Fortunately Assam escaped at that time these degrading and inhuman occurrences, but it could not do so for all time. The riots and communal massacres and the influx of refugees from certain parts of East Bengal to Assam did not fail to have their own inevitable repercussions; they led to some atrocities which, however, were insignificant compared with those which occurred elsewhere and to the departure of some Muslims from Assam. The huge problems of the relief and rehabilitation of this vast mass of humanity form the background, necessitating the formulation of a special question regarding refugees in this Census, at the request of the Central Ministry of Rehabilitation.

(iv) For the first time we have recorded the P/42—E.

relationship to the head of the household and every individual within the family.

(v) As already explained above no attempt was made to record caste or community of every individual. Instead, Part (c), Question No. 2 was set apart to find out if an individual belonged to any of the special groups, *viz.*, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes or Anglo-Indians. If a person did not belong to any of these groups, no entry was to be made against such person in this question.

(vi) Another innovation in the questionnaire this time was to leave the determination of the nature and scope of one question to the discretion of the individual State Governments, according to the decision of the 1st Census Conference held at Delhi. The Governments of Assam, Tripura and Manipur used this discretion to collect statistics regarding 'land owned' and 'land rented' by their indigenous persons. The use of word 'indigenous', however, gave rise to some misunderstanding, especially in some parts of Goalpara and Cachar, by persons who thought they would be adversely affected by such enumeration. No amount of assurances could remove their apprehensions, which were, needless to say, unfounded.

(vii) Through a subsidiary form, particulars in respect of each Village regarding its liability to floods and epidemics, facilities for drinking water, medical help, education, marketing, communications and principal crops grown were collected. The collected data were not merely compiled, but printed for every village separately in the District Census Handbooks.

(viii) Through another form, a survey of Small (cottage) Industries was conducted simultaneously with special emphasis on a complete survey of each and every hand-loom—the premier cottage industry of Assam. Thus, the 1951 Census meant not merely the counting of heads but has attempted to give an instantaneous photograph as if taken on 1st March 1951, of our national life as a whole in all its varied aspects—demographic, economic, educational and social, and has involved extraction of information which will play a vital role during the ensuing decade in the determination of many of our administrative and economic plans and policies.

(ix) An important innovation of this Census was the preparation of a **National Register of Citizens** in which all important census data was

transcribed from the census slips, with the exception of Census Questions No. 6 (displaced persons), 8 (bilingualism) and 13 (indigenous persons). The Register uses the same symbols and abbreviations and is a copy of the census slips. It is compiled in separate parts, one relating to each village and each ward of a town. It will be maintained as a permanent record and kept up-to-date by collecting information through village officials. As it was not possible to hand-sort for households slips which relate to individuals, the National Register of Citizens giving the details of the individuals arranged by households was utilised for sorting and tabulating certain characteristics of the households like their size, ordinary structure and composition. Thus, the National Register of Citizens will maintain intercensal continuity, will be useful for Electoral and various other administrative purposes and also serve as a suitable frame for socio-economic surveys based on random sampling.

(x) The present Census like its immediate predecessor of 1941, but unlike all previous censuses upto 1931 is a *de-jure* census, i.e., a census based on normal residence. The 1931 census with its predecessors was a *de-facto* one, i.e., it counted people found present at a place or area at a particular point of time. The Reference Date for the census was 1st March 1951. Enumeration, however, started on the 9th February 1951, and lasted for 20 days, ending on the 28th February, 1951, with the subsequent first 3 days of March devoted to a final check-up of new births and deaths or visitors unaccounted for. However, the present Census cannot be called a fully *de-jure* census and can only be termed as a modified *de-jure* census in view of the fact that persons who were not present in their ordinary place of residence for the arbitrary period of 20 days selected for census enumeration were not accounted for at their residence, but at the places for which they had left.

(xi) **Economic Status** : Last but not the least of the innovations in the present questionnaire was to attempt a two-fold classification of the economic status of every individual, viz., dependency and employment. The first part required the labelling of every person as a self-supporting person or an earning dependant or a non-earning dependant. Every single human being was to be allotted one of these labels and

not more than one. This will be referred to as his primary economic status.

The second part of the question had no application to non-earning dependants or to earning dependants. It relates only to self-supporting persons and even among them those exceptional cases of self-supporting persons who support themselves without gainful occupation or economic activity, e.g., rentiers and pensioners are not covered. All others, (i.e., all those self-supporting persons who are both economically active and gainfully occupied) are to be allotted one or other of the 3 labels, (viz., 'employer', 'employee' or 'independent worker') and this will be referred to as his secondary economic status.

(xii) **1951 Tabulation** : There were four main differences between the procedure for tabulation at the 1931 and earlier censuses and the procedure followed at this census.

#### (1) Substitution of Economic Classification for Classification based on Religion

In the past, census slips were, at the very outset, sorted on the basis of religion, and the figures of population by religion thus obtained were the basis of village statistics. The separation of slips by religion and sex was maintained throughout the sorting operations; and thus certain census characteristics were cross tabulated by religion. During the tabulation of the 1951 Census, the slips were sorted in the first instance, into the following eight livelihood classes of the population :—

##### Agricultural Classes

- I. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned; and their dependants.
- II. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned; and their dependants.
- III. Cultivating labourers; and their dependants.
- IV. Non-cultivating owners of land; agricultural rent receivers; and their dependants.

##### Non-Agricultural Classes

Persons (including dependants) who derive their Principal Means of Livelihood from—

- V. Production other than cultivation
- VI. Commerce.
- VII. Transport.
- VIII. Other services and miscellaneous sources.

The resulting figures were given in the Primary Census Abstract and this Abstract forms the basis for village statistics. The slips as thus initially separated were kept separate throughout the sorting operations.

(2) **The Concurrent 10% Sample :** When the slips were initially sorted, a ten per cent sample was taken out. The figures required for the Economic Tables were compiled separately for the 90 per cent slips and the 10 per cent sample. The two results were combined to produce figures for the total population. The operations on the 90 per cent slips and the 10 per cent sample proceeded simultaneously. There is thus a record for every census tract in each district of the comparison between 10 per cent sample figures and the total figures for the Economic Tables as well as many other tables. The 'Age Tables', however, were constructed only from the 10 per cent sample.

(3) **Household Size and Composition :** In the past censuses, the characteristics of individuals only were tabulated. At the present census, certain characteristics of households were sorted and tabulated. It was not possible to hand-sort for households, slips which relate to individuals. The National Register of Citizens which gives the details of individuals arranged by households were utilised for this purpose. The study of the households was made on the basis of one in one thousand sample of households. An abstract from the National Register of Citizens called the 'Census Abstract of Sample Households' was first prepared for the sample households. The construction of Household (size and composition) Table was based on this abstract.

(4) **Preservation of Census Records and Registers :** In the past, the abstract (first prepared in the process of sorting and compilation) was used for compiling village statistics, which were retained as unpublished administrative records by some States; and printed and published by others.

At the present census, the following records (prepared during the process of sorting and compilation) were brought together and printed in a single volume, called the District Census Handbook :—

- (i) District Census Tables (furnishing district data with break-up for census tracts, within the district);

(ii) Census Abstracts :—

- (a) Primary Census Abstracts,
- (c) Census Abstracts of Small-scale Industries.

The Governments of Assam, Tripura and Manipur have accepted the suggestion of the Central Government and proceeded with printing the District Census Handbooks.

The Sample Households Abstracts, however, have not been printed but bound together in a single manuscript volume separately. It will not be published. Together with the National Register of Citizens it will be used for purposes of reference and also as a Sampling Basis for population surveys in the intercensal years.

(xiii) Lastly, one of the most important innovations of the 1951 Census is the adoption of a scheme of Sample Verification of the 1951 total count for the first time in the recorded census history of the entire country. Please see Para. 6, Chapter I for a detailed treatment of this subject.

5. **The nature and scope of the present Census Report :**

Consistently with the view of the late Mr. Yeatts who believed that the day for the old omnibus type Census Report has gone, and in line with the directions of Shri R. A. Gopalswami, I.C.S., the Registrar General, India, the scope and purpose of the present Report are defined and limited to provide the following :—

'(i) A narrative review of data relating to the numbers, life and livelihood of the people; such data will be deemed to consist of (a) replies to questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 14 at the 1951 census, (b) corresponding data of past censuses; and (c) authoritative non-census data, if any, which may be readily available and reliable to such census data.'

'(ii) Narrative exposition of significant changes from Census to Census or between different territorial units brought to light by the foregoing review (for purposes of such exposition, the Natural Divisions and districts will be the territorial units in the State Reports.); and

'(iii) A narrative explanation of the significant changes referred to above, in so far as such an explanation can be readily available on the basis of local knowledge and experience of the writers of the Reports or of District Officers and



Heads of Departments who may be consulted by them.'

These limitations involved the consequence that the Reports will exclude detailed treatment of the data relating to a number of subjects, e.g. 'Backward Classes', 'Language', 'Religion' and 'Education', etc. A separate series of publications called '1951 Census Brochures' will be prepared—one for each subject.

### Seven Chapters

The subject matter of the Report has been arranged in seven chapters as follows:—

- Chapter I General population,
- Chapter II Rural population,
- Chapter III Urban population,
- Chapter IV Agricultural classes,
- Chapter V Non-agricultural classes,
- Chapter VI Families, Sexes, and the principal age groups, and
- Chapter VII Literacy.

Each chapter has been divided into a number of sections and in each chapter a number of summary tables has been given, which are mainly derived from the subsidiary tables. In view of the large number of displaced persons who have come to Assam, and the importance of the subject, I have written an additional Chapter VIII on Displaced Persons for inclusion in this Report. A number of Appendices have been added at the end of the Report to throw further light on subjects derived from or related to the 1951 Census.

### 6. Some difficulties in conducting the 1951 Census :

I did have at this census more than my share of those serious mishaps, which compelled J. McSwiney, one of my predecessors in Assam to aptly compare the course of census operations to that of true love. While most of my colleagues in other states joined their duties before November, 1949, at the latest, I could only take over my new duties as late as 28th January, 1950. This initial delay of more than two months in joining the new post dogged my footsteps compelling me to take rigorous measures to make up the leeway in fulfilling the Census Calendar in due course. The stock of paper for printing the Enumerator's Instructions, Census Handbooks and N.R.C. forms indented from Calcutta was held

up there and could not be secured by the Government Press, Shillong, till the middle of October, 1950. This delayed the printing of booklets of Instructions to Enumerators and their despatch to the field staff. In some cases, the booklets were received by the enumerators so late that the oral training imparted by the supervisors and charge superintendents did not help them as much as it should have.

Another great source of anxiety was revealed at the second Census Conference at Delhi in December, 1950, when the Registrar General brought to my notice the unconscious departure of Assam from the general instructions for all India regarding the definition of the term 'owned land' and 'rented land'; this was subsequently fully rectified.

Another series of mishaps resulted from the extraordinary circumstances prevailing in Assam during the course of 1950, which kept most of the District Officers heavily pre-occupied with their own normal as well as extraordinary duties, on account of which they were generally not able to give as much personal attention to census work as I had hoped to secure and as they themselves would have liked to give; indeed the first requisite for the success of enumeration is the personal interest, co-operation and cordial assistance of the District Officers. As far as possible, however, they did their best by giving personal attention to the work whenever possible and by encouragement to the subordinate staff. The year 1950 in which preliminary census arrangements were to be perfected was a year of very great stress and difficulty for Assam, Tripura and Manipur. In February and March, 1950, there were widespread communal disturbances in Cachar, Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong, Darrang and Tripura, followed by a very heavy influx of refugees. The District Officers were head over ears in work simply in maintaining law and order and in arranging relief and rehabilitation of the incoming refugees. During the first half of this year, it was difficult for the District Officers to take interest in anything which was not immediately connected with these matters. This was followed by the Great Assam Earthquake of August, 1950, and the subsequent floods, with consequent shortage of foodstuffs, which diverted the entire attention of the District authorities of the remaining districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur and some of the Frontier Tracts towards meeting the problems

created by these visitations of nature. In the wake of this great earthquake and floods Assam overnight became heavily deficit in rice and paddy and the next immediate task of the Government was to launch an intensive all-out procurement drive in all districts of Assam. It was followed by another drive against the anti-social and anti-state elements especially in the districts of Sibsagar, Kamrup and Goalpara, and in the State of Tripura. On account of the earthquake, the census work of North Lakhimpur hardly made any progress. It was only on account of the personal care and efforts of Shri B. M. Dam, A.C.S., who assumed charge of North Lakhimpur Sub-division soon after that its census work ultimately turned out to be as satisfactory as elsewhere. The earthquake was also greatly responsible for the set-back to the census work of Dibrugarh Sub-division which was promptly set right by Shri M. K. Choudhary, Senior B.A.C., Dibrugarh, as soon as he assumed charge as District Census Officer at my urgent request to the Government.

The problem of finding residential and official accommodation for my Census Office when I took over charge as well as buildings for housing the two huge Tabulation Offices in Assam caused me considerable anxiety before it was solved to my entire satisfaction on account of the wholehearted co-operation of Shri U. C. Roy, I.A.S., Deputy Commissioner, Shillong, and Shri J. Dumbreck, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Jorhat. At Shillong, Shri U. C. Roy, uniformly helpful and obliging, was never more so when he made available a large newly built cinema hall for housing the Shillong Tabulation Office at a reasonable rent. It was through the kind intervention of Shri Dumbreck, and the good offices of Shri Rahman, the Regional Director of Employment and Resettlement, Assam and Shri Guha, Principal, Technical Training School, Jorhat, that I secured ample accommodation for the Jorhat Tabulation Office also. My most grateful thanks are due to all these gentlemen.

The last hurdle was due to the revised instructions of the Registrar General to consolidate the figures of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district from the figures of its constituent units, viz., North Cachar Hills Sub-division, and (Sibsagar and Nowgong) Mikir Hills Excluded Areas included under their parent districts. We had already prepared our A Series

tables, which had to be re-done. The entire B, C and D series tables of the districts concerned had to be recast in order to separate the figures for the new district. This delayed the completion of tables and the starting of this Report by about a month.

#### 7. Acknowledgment :

Though the introduction has already become lengthy I cannot close it without expressing my sense of gratitude to all who made this vast national undertaking a great success. At the head of my acknowledgments must stand the people of Assam, Manipur and Tripura, whose good sense, co-operation and sense of civic duty made the taking of the Census possible; and the great army of honorary enumerators who actually undertook the census. Acknowledgments are also due to the other ranks in the chain of census organisation, supervisors, charge superintendents, Sub-divisional and District Census Officers, Municipalities, District Boards, District Officers, successive Chief Secretaries, Secretaries and heads of Departments, no less than the heads of the States and Governments concerned. Particular thanks are due to the Election Officers who cheerfully shouldered the heavy extra burden of census work as the District Officers were pre-occupied with their normal and abnormal duties in view of the extraordinary circumstances prevailing in Assam in 1950 already referred to above. Where all did so well it may seem invidious to single out any names for special notice but I must mention the names of Shri B. C. Sinha of Silchar, Shri B. C. Bhuyan of Goalpara and the Election Officer of Karimganj, who subject to the general control of the Deputy Commissioners concerned worked wholeheartedly for the full success of the census operations in their respective sub-divisions. I am indebted to Shri M. N. Phukan, A.C.S., whose keen personal interest made the census of Manipur a great success and to Shri S. C. Kagty, I.A.S., under whose able and zealous direction, Cachar was easily the best district in Assam.

I should not forget my own office staff including the Deputy Superintendents, Shri Nalini Kant Barkakati and Shri Mohibuddin Ahmed, who worked tirelessly in the cause of the census operations. Both the Deputy Superintendents did very heavy and at times difficult and delicate duties to my entire satisfaction and received the congratulations of the Registrar



General for their earnest efforts at economy of expenditure. During my entire tenure of Office as Census Superintendent I had many occasions to recall the truth of the words of Mullan in 1931 Report who wrote "My Head Clerk, Babu Iswar Chandra Pukayastha, has been all that a head clerk should be and more". I am deeply grateful to him for his unstinted co-operation, extremely hard and accurate work and sound advice based upon his vast experience of three previous censuses. I could not have hoped for a better head assistant for office work. I am also grateful to my stenographer, Rukmani Babu who always cheerfully worked for me and Shri R. K. Sharma, and Shri K. Subramaniam, my personal assistants in the present job for preparing revised drafts and typing the same.

My thanks are due to the press and all public and political organisations, especially the Assam Provincial Congress Committee, for their uniformly friendly attitude and full publicity to all census news.

For the printing of this Report, Municipal Press, Bombay, is responsible. For this my thanks are due to Shri P. R. Nayak, I.C.S., Municipal Commissioner, for his kind permission to allow the Report to be printed at the

Press under his control and to Shri S. G. Telat B.A. (Hons.), Manager, Municipal Printing Press, Bombay, for doing it early and well and to Shri V. R. Ranade for all the trouble he had in reading and correcting the proofs. Thanks are also due to the Superintendent, Government Press, Shillong, and the Special Officer i/c, Shri P. L. Shome for keen interest they have taken in printing the table volumes and District Census Handbooks, inspite of many odds.

I am grateful to all my colleagues in other States of India for their co-operation, (one of them Shri J. D. Keruwalla, I.A.S., alas, is no more). I must single out my colleague from West Bengal, Shri A. Mitra, I.C.S., for his unfailing help and co-operation in securing paper, printing and despatching forms, etc., as also my successor in Assam, Shri S. C. Sarma, and colleagues in the Office of the Registrar General, Shri D. Natarajan, Asstt. Census Commissioner, and Shri P. N. Kaul, Central Tabulation Officer.

I cannot conclude without conveying my deep gratitude and thanks to my chief, Shri R. A. Gopalaswami, I.C.S., Registrar General, India, for his uniformly friendly guidance and unfailing and prompt help on all occasions.

NEW DELHI :

15th November, 1952.

R. B. VAGHAIWALLA,  
Superintendent, Census Operations,  
Assam, Manipur and Tripura.

#### NOTE :

I alone, in my personal capacity, am responsible for all statements made and conclusions drawn in this Report; they do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Assam or Government of India. My only regret is that on account of handing over charge

as early as on the 25th June, 1952, and taking over at Delhi as Director of Field Operations, Community Projects Administration, Government of India, I have been unable to devote as much time and thought to the writing of this Report as I wished.

R. B. VAGHAIWALLA  
15-11-52.

## CHAPTER I

# GENERAL POPULATION

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 1. Scope of the Report

This report deals with the census statistics for the Part 'A' State of Assam and the two Part 'C' States of Manipur and Tripura. All these three states lie on the extreme eastern frontier of India and are practically cut off from the rest of the country except by a narrow strip of territory joining them with the State of West Bengal through the district of Cooch Behar. All of them are completely land locked; hence they have no coast line whatsoever.

#### Assam :

Assam lies on the north-east border of India and is surrounded on all sides by other independent States like Bhutan and Tibet on the North, China and Burma on the East, Burma on the South and Pakistan on the West. It is surrounded by mountainous ranges at least on three sides; on the north are the Himalayas shutting off the table land of Bhutan and Tibet, on the north-east is the Patkoi range along with a series of other hills and on the east and the south are situated hills which merge with those forming the limits of the independent Republic of Burma and Part 'C' State of Tripura. It is only on the West where it adjoins West Bengal and Eastern Pakistan that there are no hills. It comprises the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra down to the point where the river emerging on the Bengal delta takes a sudden

southward curve and a portion of the valley of the Surma together with the intervening range of hills which forms the water-shed between them. It lies between latitudes  $22^{\circ}19'$  and  $28^{\circ}16'$  North and longitudes  $89^{\circ}42'$  and  $97^{\circ}12'$  East and contains a total area of 85,012 square miles, of which as much as 61,979 square miles are hills. In language, race, culture and creed there exists perhaps greater diversity in this State than anywhere else in India. It is one of the most polyglot of the States in India and the Khasis possess a tongue the nearest affinity of which is as far distant as Cambodia and Anam. It is a country of plains and hills; the name Assam is reported to be derived not merely from that of the Ahoms—a shan tribe which enjoyed the sovereignty here before the advent of the British, but also from its uneven surface consisting of hills and plains, 'asam' in Sanskrit meaning uneven.

#### Manipur :

Manipur, on the extreme Eastern frontier of India, is about double the size of an average plain district of Assam but with only half its population. It lies between  $23^{\circ}50'$  and  $25^{\circ}41'$  North and  $92^{\circ}58'$  and  $94^{\circ}45'$  East. Bounded on the East by Burma, on the West by the districts of Cachar and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, on the North by the Naga Hills district, and on the South by Burma and the Lushai Hills, Manipur consists of a tract of

hilly country with a valley (about 2,500 ft. above sea level), about 30 miles long and 20 miles wide, shut in on every side, with a cool and pleasant climate throughout the year, and only 50" average annual rainfall at Imphal. Manipur is only connected with Assam by the Dimapuri-Kohima Imphal Road, and except by air, has no other link with the rest of India. At the time of the integration of the States of the Princely India with the rest of the country, it has retained its separate identity as a Part 'C' State under the new Constitution of India, and is administered by a Chief Commissioner.

#### Tripura :

Tripura, lying between 22°56' and 24°32' N and 91°9' and 92°20' E, is almost entirely surrounded by East Pakistan on all sides. The country is broken up by a number of hill ranges with marshy valleys in between. It has only a thin tenuous link with India through Cachar which is one of the easternmost districts of the Indian Union. It is bounded on the East by the Lushai Hill district and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of East Pakistan, on the West by the districts of Tippierra and Naokhali of East Pakistan, on the North by Cachar and on the South by the districts of Naokhali and Chittagong of East Pakistan.

In view of its strategic importance and other historic and political reasons it has been retained separately as a Part 'C' State under the new Constitution of India and is administered by a Chief Commissioner. Regarding connection with the rest of India, Tripura is worse off than even Assam or Manipur. It is entirely surrounded by East Pakistan on three sides, whereas on the remaining side thin hills separate it from Cachar, the easternmost district of India. Only recently, a new, jeepable road has been constructed all through the Indian territory (Cachar, Sylhet with Karimganj). Apart from this slender link, the only connection of Tripura with the rest of India, as in the case of the neighbouring Part 'C' State of Manipur, is by air.

#### 2. Changes in Area

The area of Assam as now constituted is 81,400 square miles. The decade saw no change in the boundaries of Manipur and Tripura. The area of Manipur is 8,627.8 square miles and that of Tripura 4,031.7 square miles; these figures are the latest determinations of the

Survey of India and differ from those given in the 1941 Census Tables by 7.8 and 14.3 square miles respectively.

Assam, however, could not escape the violent and revolutionary changes through which India has passed during the last decade. The Mountbatten Plan envisaging the partition of India involved Assam as well. The last Viceroy and Governor General, Lord Mountbatten, singled out the overwhelmingly Muslim majority district of Sylhet with an area of 5,478 square miles and a population of 3,116,602 according to the 1941 Census, for a referendum to decide whether it should form a part of the new Dominion of Pakistan or whether its destiny should continue to remain linked with India. Accordingly the Sylhet referendum was held in July 1947 according to which the district elected to go to Pakistan by a majority of over half a lakh of votes.

The Bengal Boundary Commission presided over by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, set up to demarcate the boundaries of the new Provinces of East Bengal and West Bengal, was called upon to demarcate the boundaries of the Province of Assam also so far as they touched the Sylhet district. As a result of the Radcliffe Award, the district of Sylhet went to East Pakistan with the exception of the three Thanas of Badarpur (47 sq. miles), Ratabari (240 sq. miles), Patharkandi (277 sq. miles) and a portion of the Karimganj Thana (145 sq. miles). Only these thanas with a total area of 709 sq. miles and a population of 291,320 persons were retained in Assam and joined with the old district of Cachar forming a new sub-division, *viz.*, Karimganj. Throughout this report, therefore, Karimganj is treated as a part of Cachar, previous figures for which are adjusted to allow for this addition to its area and population. Thus the old province of Assam lost practically the whole district of Sylhet (with the exception of the truncated portion mentioned above) involving an area of 4,769 square miles and a population of 2,825,282. This is the most important change in the area and boundaries of the new State of Assam—a part of the price India had to pay, before it could take its proud place as a sovereign democratic Republic in the comity of nations. Though Assam's loss in area as a result of this partition is negligible (it has lost only 1/18th of its existing area) it has lost very nearly 1/3rd of its entire present population and along with it the vast paddy lands and the tea, lime and cement industries of Sylhet; the

far-reaching effects of this loss will continue to be felt by Assam as well as India for many years to come.

Apart from the independence and the partition of the country which affected the area of the new State, another factor which did so was the bloodless revolution brought about by that wise and far-sighted statesman, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. His historic achievement in unifying the country by integrating the old Princely States with the rest of India had its repercussions even in the far-off Assam. After prolonged negotiations the petty states in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills numbering 25 and covering an area of 3,788 square miles with a population of 213,586 according to the 1941 census, were merged with the district of Khasi and Jaintia Hills at the inauguration of the Republic of India on 26th January 1950, forming the new, enlarged administrative district of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Thus during the last decade the old province of Assam lost a net area of 981 square miles and a population of 2,611,666 souls before emerging into its new status as an autonomous State in the Union of India.

The area of Assam as shown in the 1941\* Census Report was 67,359 against 85,012 sq. miles as determined by the Surveyor General of India, which is now given in the 1951 Census Table A-I. The 1931 census gives the area of Assam as 67,334 sq. miles. The 1941 figures, however, includes the area of the whole Sylhet, 5,478 sq. miles, as well as Manipur, 8,620 sq. miles. As the 1951 area excludes Manipur and includes, as shown above, only 709 sq. miles of the old district of Sylhet, the comparable figure for Assam for 1941 will be 53,970 sq. miles only. The 1951 area, therefore, exceeds the 1941 figures by the huge margin of 31,042 sq. miles, mainly because the 1951 figure shows the **total** area of the state including the area of those parts which were not regularly censused, whereas the 1941 figure applies only to the **censused** portions of the state and omits the uncensused area of the State. This large discrepancy is due to two factors :—

(1) According to para. 2 of the fly-leaf of Table I of the 1941 Census, "In the Sadiya Frontier tract and Balipara Frontier tract, however, the areas locally determined have been

adopted, as the Survey of India's figures relate to the whole of the tract but not to the administered and censused area. The total mapped area of these tracts is 20,034 and 12,034 square miles respectively". As the 1941 Table I accounted for an area of 3,880 square miles only for these two tracts (3,309 for Sadiya Frontier Tract and 571 for Balipara Frontier Tract) it ignored a major portion of these two tracts (28,197 sq. miles) which was not regularly censused in that year.

(2) Again the 1951 census accounts for an area of 2,086.4 square miles of the Naga Tribal Area which was entirely omitted in the 1941 census.

Thus these two factors alone are responsible for a difference of 30,283 between the 1941 and the 1951 area figures against the total difference of 31,036. The remaining difference of 753 is mainly due to the more exact determination by the Survey of India of the area figures for all districts of Assam in general and for the hill tracts of the North East Frontier Agency in particular. The area of each district as now calculated by the Surveyor-General of India is given in the Main Table A-I (Area, Houses and Population) in Part II-A of this report. Its fly-leaf gives an indication of these and other changes in area.

## 2A. Changes in the areas of individual Districts

During the last decade a number of administrative measures has brought about changes in many of the old districts of Assam. Let us briefly review these changes one by one :—

### (1) Cachar :

As we have seen above, the truncated portion of the old district of Sylhet, 709 sq. miles in area, is formed into a new sub-division of Karimganj with headquarters at Karimganj and has been tagged to Cachar. On the formation of the new district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, Cachar has lost its old sub-division of North Cachar Hills with an area of 1,896.8 sq. miles and a population of 37,361 in 1941.

### (2) Darrang :

The present area of Darrang, viz., 2,814 square miles does not include the plain portion of the Balipara Frontier Tract which has been added to it after 1st March 1951.

\* Census of India 1941—IX—Assam-K.W.P. Marar—Tables, page 2.

**(3) Nowgong :**

The Mikir Hills Excluded Area of this district has now been separated to form the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. Nowgong has thereby lost an area of 1,715.9 square miles, and has now been reduced to 2,168.7 square miles only.

**(4) Sibsagar :**

The Mikir Hills Excluded Area of this district also along with that of Nowgong has been separated while forming the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills; Sibsagar has thereby lost 1,676.3 square miles of area and is now reduced to 3,454.2 square miles only.

**(5) Lakhimpur :**

During the last decade Lakhimpur lost 103 square miles, detached from it while forming the new Tirap Frontier Tract in 1941. It should be carefully noted that Lakhimpur (4,068 square miles) in this Census entirely excludes the area of the plain portions of the North East Frontier Agency districts of the Mishmi Hills, Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract which have been added to Lakhimpur after 1st March 1951.

**(6) United K. & J. Hills District :**

As we have already seen the present area of 5,533 includes Khasi States (3,788 square miles) which were merged into it on 26th January 1951; on the other hand the district lost an area of 603.2 square miles being Block I and Block II of Jowai sub-division with a population of 22,544, which has now been transferred to the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills.

As explained below only the A series Tables show the district as now constituted. All other Tables, continue to include here the data regarding persons inhabiting Blocks I and II of Jowai sub-division.

**(7) United Mikir and North Cachar Hills :**

This is an entirely new district. The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India created two autonomous districts of (1) Mikir Hills consisting of the old Mikir Hills Excluded Areas of Nowgong Hills and Sibsagar and (2) North

Cachar Hills. Till November, 1951, they remained under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioners of the parent districts. The census figures were also, therefore, included under their parent districts. It was only on 17th November, 1951, that a new Administrative district consisting of following areas was formed.

	Square miles.
(i) Mikir Hills Excluded Area of Nowgong	1,715.9
(ii) Mikir Hills Excluded Area of Sibsagar	1,676.3
(iii) North Cachar Hills sub-division	1,896.8
(iv) Blocks I and II of Jowai sub-division	603.2
	<hr/>
Total Area	5,892.2
	<hr/>

It is to be very carefully noted that only the Tables of the A series represent the entire district. For purposes of other Tables, namely, of B, C and D series, etc., the data for 22,544 persons which is the population of the portion of Jowai Sub-Division included in the present district still continue to be shown under the United K. and J. Hills District. It should also be noted that the present population of this new district is an under-estimate, because full adjustments regarding the exact boundaries of the new district could not be made before the Reference Date. The present boundaries differ in some respects from those of the old Excluded Areas. The slips of persons inhabiting the villages of Borpathar and Sarupathar mauzas on the west of the Dhansiri river could not be separated from those of persons living on its eastern bank. As a result separate tabulation was possible only for the slips of the Mikir Hills Tract which was clearly designated as such.

**(8) Mishmi Hills :**

Originally it constituted the Sadiya sub-division of the old Sadiya Frontier Tract of the 1941 Census. It was made an independent district under its new name in July 1948, in charge of a Political Officer. The present area includes its plains portion of 391.7 square miles which has been transferred to Lakhimpur after 1st March 1951.

**(9) Abor Hills :**

Originally Abor Hills constituted the Pasighat sub-division of the old Sadiya Frontier Tract of the 1941 census. It was formed an independent district under the name of Abor Hills in July 1948, in charge of a Political Officer. It continues to include an area of 273.9 square miles, being that of its plains portion joined with Lakhimpur after 1st March 1951.

**(10) Tirap Frontier Tract :**

This new Frontier District was constituted in 1941 by excluding 103 square miles from Lakhimpur and joining them with a portion of the Old Sadiya Frontier Tract and a portion of the Naga Tribal Area. (See 12 below).

**(11) Balipara Frontier Tract :**

Only its plain portion covering an area of 531.2 square miles was regularly censused. As this has been entirely transferred to the district of Darrang only after the 1st March 1951, the present figures continue to be shown separately.

**(12) Naga Tribal Area :**

This new political area does not feature at all in the 1941 Census. Covering an area of 2,086.4 square miles, it is one of the Part B Tribal Arcas of Assam included in paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The above is a brief narration of the changes in areas of the districts of Assam that have taken place during the last decade. Necessary adjustments for these changes have been made in the population figures given in the A series and E series (Summary Figures by Districts & Thanas) tables. Wherever comparative figures of the previous census are considered the effect of these changes in area has been duly considered. It will be noticed, however, that the areas of even those districts entirely unaffected by any boundary changes differ from those given in previous Reports and Tables. This is due to the fact that the present figures are the latest determinations of the Survey of India arrived at from up-to-date topographical maps.

**3. Difference in Area Figures of A and E Series Explained :**

Table 1.1 given below summarises the difference between the area figures of Assam and its

Natural Divisions, Manipur and Tripura, given by the Surveyor General and by the State Survey Departments :—

TABLE 1.1  
*Area figures according to Surveyor  
General and State Governments*

State or Natural Division	Area as given by Surveyor General	Area as given by State Survey Deptt.
Assam	85,012	85,294
Assam Plains	23,033	23,138
Assam Hills	61,979	62,156
Manipur	8,629	8,620
Tripura	4,032	4,116

The area figures given in Table A-1 (Area, Houses and Population) and those in Table E (Summary Figures by Districts and Thanas), given in Part II-A of this Report, differ in the case of the Assam State by as much as 282 square miles. The reason is that the figures in Table A-1 are those supplied by the Surveyor General of India for the whole districts. The Surveyor General, however, was not in a position to supply the figures for the thanas. Hence for purposes of Table E, the area figures given by the Survey Department of the State Governments, have been made use of. Thus in considering the area and density, figures supplied by the Surveyor General and by the Survey Departments of the States should be kept in view. For districts the figures supplied by the Surveyor General should be regarded as final and authoritative, while for smaller administrative divisions and sub-divisions those supplied by the Survey Department and the Deputy Commissioners are the best available.

For Manipur the area given by the Surveyor General is 8,628 square miles, while that given by the State Survey Department is 8,620; similar figures for Tripura are 4,032 and 4,116, respectively.

**4. Difference Between Actual Area and Censused Area in Assam :**

In the case of Assam it should be clearly borne in mind that there is a considerable difference between the actual area of the State and its Natural Divisions and Sub-divisions as given by

the Surveyor General and that of their portions which were actually censused.

TABLE 1.2  
*Area, actual and censused, of Assam and its Natural Divisions*

	Actual Area Sq. miles	Censused Area Sq. miles
Assam State	85,012	51,415
Assam Plains	23,033	23,033
Assam Hills	61,979	28,382
Autonomous Districts	27,010	27,010
N.E.F.A.	34,969	1,372

TABLE 1.3  
*Area, actual and censused, of the N. E. F. A. districts*

	Actual Area Sq. miles	Censused Area Sq. miles
N.E.F.A.	34,969	1,372
1. Mishmi Hills	9,390	392
2. Aboi Hills	8,544	274
3. Trip Frontier Tract	2,876	125
4. Balipara Frontier Tract	12,104	531
5. Naga Tribal Area	2,055	50

Table 1.2 and 1.3 given above clearly bring out two very important facts :

(1) An immense area in Assam, viz., 33,597 square miles was not censused at all at the present census. Both Assam Plains and the Autonomous Districts (See para. 8 below) are fully censused.

(2) The immense uncensused area is confined to Assam Hills only; even here, it refers exclusively to the hilly tracts of the North East Frontier Agency (hereafter referred to as the N.E.F.A.).

The reasons for leaving out a vast area of 33,597 square miles out of regular census operations are not far to seek. They are mostly connected with the extremely difficult nature of the terrain, which render vast areas entirely inaccessible. The N.E.F.A. contains areas untrodden by civilised persons; there yet remain vast tracts which have never been visited by any Governmental agency or officer. Administration in these areas has just started from scratch. Hence it was not possible to undertake regular census operations in this immense area, which were, all along in the past confined only

to their plain portions. This meant in effect, in consultation with the Advisor to His Excellency the Governor of Assam, the exclusion of the entire Part B Tribal Areas of the N.E.F.A. Though the area figures given in Table A-I are those for the entire districts right up to the MacMohan Line, the population figures therein pertain to only the regularly censused portions, for which full data were secured and tabulated on slips. The population of Part B Tribal Areas of these districts for which even reliable estimates were not available, is completely excluded from the figures given in columns 8 to 16 of Table A-I.

Table 1.3 shows that only a small plain portion of the N.E.F.A. 1,372 square miles out of its immense total area of 34,969 square miles was regularly censused. With the sole exception of 50 square miles of the censused area of the Naga Tribal Area, this area of 1,352 square miles has now i.e. after 1st March, 1951, been merged with the neighbouring districts of Lakhimpur and Darrang. As the change took place after the Reference Date of the 1951 Census, their data continue to be treated separately from those of these two plain districts and under their own parent hill tracts of the N.E.F.A.

Logically, Table A-I therefore should have shown only the area of the regularly censused portions, given in Tables 2 and 3 above. This was the practice in the past censuses. The present departure from past practice is made at the instance of the Registrar General in the interest of All-India uniformity.

This difference between the two areas—the actual and the regularly censused—has an important bearing on the problem of density of Assam, its natural divisions and districts as well on the problem of pressure of population in the State.

## 5. The Enumerated Population :

The population dealt with in this report and shown in detail in the Table Volumes is in general the **normal population** of Assam on the Reference Date, viz., the 1st March 1951. As it is not possible to count all the people of the State in one day without having an altogether unduly unwieldy staff of enumerators, enumeration was spread over 20 days from 9th February to 28th February. The first 3 days of March



were devoted to a final check-up, cancelling the slips of those who were dead after having been enumerated or filling up new slips of visitors not enumerated before or new births before the Reference Date, but during the enumeration period, which were not censused in the first 20 days, during the earlier visits of the enumerators to the households. But the population of a district, sub-division or town will include not only the normal residents who were actually found in their homes during the enumeration period but also temporary visitors who were absent from their original homes during the entire enumeration period. The houseless persons who were not enumerated elsewhere were also enumerated on the last day of the enumeration period at places where they were actually found.

There was no final check for hill districts on account of the difficulties of terrain and communications. Thus neither the slips of persons who were dead after the enumeration started could be cancelled nor new slips of births could be filled up for these areas, except where information was readily available to the enumerators. This difficulty is inherent in the very nature of the administration, terrain and communications in the hill districts, and is likely to remain unsolved for quite some time to come.

The institutional population and houseless persons who were censused on the last date of the enumeration period forms a very small proportion of the total population of the State. In Assam, persons coming under this category were only 35,586 out of a total of 9,043,707, constituting 0.4%. In Manipur and Tripura, the population under this category is 1,333 and 36,196, i.e., 0.2% and 5.7%, respectively.

As discussed in para. 3, the Part B Tribal Areas of the N.E.F.A. were omitted from regular census operations as in the past, excepting a small fraction of its area, viz., 1,372 square miles. The population of these uncensused areas, therefore, is completely excluded from the enumerated population of 9,043,707 for Assam. It is not possible even to make a firm, reasonably accurate and readily verifiable estimate of this population. Hence, all census data for Assam, whether population area or density, age, sex or civil condition or economic data, will altogether exclude any treatment for the Part B Tribal Areas of the N.E.F.A. The only exception, of course, will be that of the small plain portion of 1,372 square miles as mentioned above. Thus Assam in this report will be

for all practical purposes Assam minus Part B Tribal Areas of the N.E.F.A.

#### 6. Accuracy of the census

During the last year, I have been questioned *ad nauseam*, 'How far are your census figures accurate and reliable?' In view of its fundamental importance, my predecessors, both in Assam and elsewhere, had the experience of the very question being flung in their faces with the same tedious, almost irritating frequency. They or rather anyone connected with the conduct of a census in the past tended not unnaturally to be most vigorous in defence of its accuracy, claiming every census to be better and more accurate than its predecessors. Apart from professional or departmental zeal and pride, this claim was to some extent justified because every Census Superintendent had the experience of his predecessors to steer him clear of pitfalls and to bring about increasing perfection of method and organisation in order to catch every single person in the census net. Again the claim had a sound basis in that the town element in Assam as elsewhere in India is very small. The rural enumerator, the most important single cog in the census wheel, deals with persons he has known for long and is helped by the stationary habits of the villagers living in his block, who are little given to change of residence, and it is difficult indeed for even the wildest stranger to enter, much less remain unperceived in a village over the great bulk of the State; therefore, the chances of anyone escaping the census net are small in the extreme. No wonder if my predecessors felt it to be monstrously unjust that so much labour of theirs, helped by the above circumstances of Indian village life, should not result in complete cover and accuracy. In stoutly defending the conduct of the census operations supervised by them and guaranteeing their accuracy with full confidence, they were strengthened in their stand by the paucity of reports of omissions or double-counting in the past and the constant supervision, check, and over-check by superior officers provided under normal census procedure. From this standpoint, Lloyd could boldly assert that his count of the 1921 Census in Assam would not differ from the actual number by more than a few persons in a million; Mullan, his successor was not so optimistic. Candidly admitting that there was no direct way of ascertaining the degree of accuracy of the census and realising that at the most all one could do was to hazard an opinion, he modestly claimed that



the census of 1931 was, to the best of his belief, as accurate as any previous census. He would have been extremely happy and satisfied if it could be proved that the error was not more than one per thousand. But this or similar opinions and claims which did indeed have a firm basis as we have seen above, were never put to test or demonstrated in figures.

#### 6A. Need for a scheme of sample verification :

Fortunately, I am in a far happier position to answer this fundamental question about the accuracy of the 1951 Census than any of my predecessors, as this time after the 1951 Census was over, a scientifically organised verification of its count was proposed by the Government of India and accepted by the Governments of all the three States of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. At the initial stage of the proposal, the Government of India went out of their way to assure the State Governments that the standard of accuracy and completeness of count achieved at this Census will compare favourably with the standard achieved in previous censuses in India. They recalled, however, that the Census, like all other administrative operations of comparable magnitude, is liable to error, inadvertent or otherwise. In view of the great importance which is increasingly attached to statistics generally and especially to basic population data yielded by the decennial census, they proposed to make a definite ascertainment of the degree of error, if any, which may be present in census statistics, as this may not probably have an important bearing on the interpretation of their significance. In coming to a definite conclusion on this subject, the Government of India were influenced by certain observations contained in a review of the population census methods of all countries published by the United Nations' Secretariat. It was stated in this review: "A scientific appraisal of the accuracy of census results has been avoided by official statistical agencies of some countries. The result is an unfounded impression in the minds of uncritical users of the figures that they are perfectly reliable. In some countries there is a progressive tendency to discuss frankly the defects in census statistics, but until this practice becomes general it will be difficult to determine with any precision the degree of reliability of the figures for most areas of the world". The authors of the review also stated that "the completeness of enumeration can be estimated by a well-planned verification carried out immediately after the original enumeration in a scientifically selected sample of the areas". In at least one

statistically advanced country, such verification showed that the percentage of omissions there cannot be regarded as negligible. Where error is not negligible, knowledge of its probable magnitude is obviously essential.

#### 6B. The Indian scheme of sample verification, its nature and scope :

The Government of India in these circumstances having accepted the need of verification of the 1951 Census Count, the Registrar General, India, formulated a scheme of sample verification in consultation with the Statistical Advisor to the Government of India. It aimed at a purely statistical determination of the degree of error present in the overall head-count of the State, either in the form of under-enumeration or over-enumeration, without being concerned with the accuracy or otherwise of answers to any of the census questions. It consisted in revisiting a perfectly random sample of households of the approximate dimension of one in one thousand to ascertain the identity and number of persons. From the very inception of the scheme it was emphasized that nothing in the nature of praise or blame for the performance of individual officers or districts was intended; all concerned were assured that even if short-comings of individual citizens, enumerators or other census officers were brought to light during its execution, no prejudicial notice would be taken of them. A census block was the area in charge of an enumerator. In rural tracts, one village census block was chosen out of every 100 blocks and in each of the selected census blocks every 10th household was chosen. In urban tracts one general census block was chosen out of every 20 blocks; and in each of selected blocks, every 50th household was chosen. The selection of sample households and blocks devolved on the officers in charge of the Tabulation Offices. The actual work of verification was to be entrusted to Magistrates only. Apart from ascertaining cases of clear omissions, fictitious entries and erroneous count of visitors and absentees, if any, in the selected sample households, the Verification Officers had to find out whether three occupied houses nearest to the sample houses were numbered for census enumeration and did find a place in the National Register of Citizens, a document which consisted of a copy of the replies to the more important census questions in respect of every person enumerated.

#### 6C. Application to Assam, Tripura and Manipur :

(a) With the prior approval of the Registrar General, the hill areas of Assam were specifically

excluded from the scope of this scheme mainly due to the following reasons :—

(i) there was never any undesirable activity or propaganda in connection with the census in these areas, where respect for authority has still not disappeared; hence the accuracy of the census work there was of the same high order as before;

(ii) apart from this *a priori* ground, the main consideration was the practical difficulties involved in the process. Communications in these hill areas are extremely difficult, many villages being either inaccessible or difficult of approach except by long and tedious marches on foot. Normally, there is only one other Magistrate apart from the head of the district, whom the latter could ill-afford to spare for long periods for verification of sample villages which may be located in all corners of his district.

(b) In the Registrar General's scheme verification had to be done on the original National Register of Citizens itself. This was completely altered with the Registrar General's approval in applying the scheme to Assam and Tripura. Sample Verification forms were printed in which the following data were copied from the relevant National Registers of Citizens, apart from full details of the location of the households :—

- (i) Serial Number of the household;
- (ii) House Number;
- (iii) Household Number;
- (iv) Name and father's or husband's name of each person enumerated in the household;
- (v) Sex;
- (vi) Total Number of persons actually enumerated in the sample household, by sex.

These details were filled up in Tabulation Offices and the Verification Officers were required only to fill up columns 10 to 22 regarding clear omissions, fictitious entries, erroneous count of visitors and absentees and omission of occupied houses.

The decision to give each Verification Officer a printed Sample Verification form containing an extract from the National Register of Citizens, rather than the National Register of Citizens itself, did complicate the matter a little. If errors crept in the Sample Verification forms in the process of copying, they would introduce a set of spurious errors into the enumeration record, which might not only burden the verifica-

tion enquiry unnecessarily but falsify the degree of accuracy of the head-count itself. Secondly a lot of scriptory work devolved on the Tabulation Offices, which was avoided in the Registrar General's scheme. After a careful consideration of these disadvantages, it was still decided to adopt the alternative scheme as sending in the original National Registers of Citizens at that stage of tabulation work would have seriously inconvenienced and hampered the preparation of the Primary Census Abstracts and disturbed the carefully worked out routine of the tabulation and compilation work. If relevant data were merely copied out in new forms, this routine could go on smoothly.

(c) Every plain sub-division of Assam constituted a Verification area and all the Verification Officers acted under the Subdivisional Officer or the Deputy Commissioner or an Officer specially designated by them in this regard as the Chief Verification Officer. The duties of the Verification and the Chief Verification Officers were clearly defined in a secret circular from the Chief Secretary, Assam. The scheme was to be kept entirely secret and confidential until it was completed, so that there would be no attempt in any direction to be fore-warned and fore-armed for verification and present a clean slate when it was put through.

(d) Verification work was indeed accepted and undertaken by the Government of Manipur as well. As it was confined only to the Imphal Valley and not to the whole State, I have not tabulated its results. The Registrar General's permission to exempt hill areas would have applied to a large portion of Tripura as well. In view of my personal misgivings regarding the full cover of Tripura's enumeration, the exemption was not availed of and the whole scheme of verification was applied to the entire State. The results have completely laid at rest the misgivings about the very moderate increase (minus the refugees) registered by Tripura in the present Census as against its immense strides in the past two censuses and have amply justified the extra trouble.

#### 6D. Results revealed by the Sample Verification :

##### (1) Difference between the number of sample households selected and verified.

The total number of houses selected for the whole of Assam was 1,147 out of which 1,096 fell in the rural areas and only 51 in

the urban tracts. Out of this, the number of sample households actually verified was 1,131 for the whole of the State (1,084 and 47 in the rural and urban areas respectively). Thus only 16 households in the whole State (12 in the rural and 4 in the urban areas) could not be actually verified. All the sample households selected for Cachar, Goalpara and Darrang were actually verified. 3 households could not be verified in Kamrup, 4 in Nowgong, only 1 in Sibsagar, whereas Lakhimpur is responsible for the omission of as many as 8. The Kamrup omissions are all confined to the urban area (only Gauhati in this case), where 3 households could not be verified in spite of the best efforts of the Verification Officer. In a growing town like Gauhati, the omission of 3 households, all small ones containing only 9 persons in all, is not surprising, as many persons there often shift from one place to another, with the demolition of small houses and the erection of new ones in their places. The only remaining omission in the urban areas of Assam occurs in Lakhimpur district where a large family at Tinsukia with 6 males and 4 females could not be verified because it had left the place without leaving any trace. Of the 12 households in the rural area of Assam which could not be verified by far the largest number, *i.e.*, 7, falls in Lakhimpur. Two households of a village could not be verified as the inmates had shifted to some tea garden in the meantime. In this district one whole village having 4 sample households could not be traced out. The reason for this unusual omission seems to be the inability of the Tabulation Office to give full name of the village concerned, which is simply described as "W.L. Application". It seems to be a waste land grant, with another likely name which was not fully mentioned by the enumerator and hence could not be written in the National Register of Citizens. If I had more time at my disposal, I should have liked to go to the bottom of the problem as to how one whole village failed to be traced out. As the sample verification had already been greatly delayed, I had to deny myself this satisfaction. Out of the 4 houses in Nowgong, which could not be verified, 2 households escaped verification because the houses were burnt and the families left during the communal disturbances of March-May, 1950, whereas in another village one household out of 2 could not be verified as the village was almost washed away by the Brahmaputra during the floods. As the percentage that could

not be verified comes only to 1.4% of the total number of selected households for the whole State, the result of the sample verification cannot have been materially affected thereby. The only result of this difference between the number of houses selected for verification and those actually verified afterwards is to reduce the sampling fraction for Assam from 1/1296 (1/1302 for rural and 1/1182 for urban areas respectively), to 1/1315 (1/1316 for rural and 1/1283 for urban areas respectively), for the actually verified houses as against the contemplated size of the sample which should have been 1/1000. For Tripura the reduction is from 1/1145 for selected houses to 1/1157 for verified houses. There being no reduction from the number of houses selected for verification in urban areas, only the sample for the rural areas of Tripura suffered a reduction in size due to this factor from 1/1107 to 1/1118. Of course, the percentage of omission in the case of urban households is as large as 8%. Hence great caution will have to be exercised while considering the break-up of the results of sample verification for the whole State, especially regarding the urban areas. The omission in the case of the rural areas of Assam being only 1.1%, we shall be on a far safer ground when drawing generalisations regarding them. In the case of Tripura, such omission, both for the State as a whole or separately for its rural area, works out only to 0.9%, there being no omission at all from the 3 sample households selected in its urban area (Agartala town).

(2) **The number of persons verified:** The total number of persons in respect of whom the verification was done was 5,864. The break-up of this figure according to districts and according to rural and urban areas is as follows:—

	Total	Rural	Urban
Assam Plains	5,864	5,633	231
Cachar	541	535	6
Goalpara	751	728	23
Kamrup	1,077	1,013	64
Darrang	620	613	7
Nowgong	700	658	42
Sibsagar	1,250	1,185	65
Lakhimpur	925	901	24

For Tripura the figure was 529 for the State (508 and 21 for rural and urban areas respectively). As the total number of enumerated household population for the whole Natural Division is 7,779,605 (Rural 7,454,542 and Urban 325,063),

the sampling fraction considering the number of persons actually verified came only to 1/1,327 for the whole Division (1/1,323 for Rural and 1/1,407 for Urban) as against the prescribed theoretical standard of 1 in 1,000. For Tripura, as we have seen above, it is 1 in 1,157 (Rural 1 in 1,139 and Urban 1 in 1,493).

(3) **Clear Omissions:** The total number of clear omissions reported for the whole State is 61, all of which were found in the rural areas. Not a single case was reported in the whole of the urban areas of Assam. This is against the *a priori* expectation that such cases should occur more frequently in the urban rather than in the rural areas but the results of sample verification lead us to exactly the opposite conclusion. It may have been that the households selected for the urban areas were too few to allow errors of this or any other nature to be reflected in their figures. Actually, the entire urban area of the State reveals only one error, i.e., fictitious entries of 6 persons leading to over-enumeration, found in a single sample household in Gauhati. No other household anywhere in the entire urban area of Assam reported this or any other type of error.

(4) **Fictitious entries:** The total number of cases of fictitious entries in the State is 15 or slightly less than one-fourth of the number of cases of clear omissions; 9 cases occur in the rural areas of the State while as many as 6 cases in the urban areas. As stated above, all the fictitious entries in the urban areas are confined to the district of Kamrup alone, and in just one household in the town of Gauhati. The Deputy Superintendent, Shillong, who appeared to be in doubt, on account of his personal knowledge of Gauhati whether the fictitious entries were really so wrote, "There is a single case of fictitious entries of 6 persons in a single household of the urban tract of the Kamrup District. In this matter, I am still in doubt because the sample household selected might have been wrongly verified." In order to lay all doubts at rest, I personally checked up the verification myself on my return from Census Conference at Calcutta in November, 1951. The Additional Deputy Commissioner who accompanied me and myself were both assured by the owner of the sample household selected for verification that the persons named in the National Register of Citizens never worked in his shop. Hence there can be no doubt regarding the accuracy of the verification. Still on the basis of a single instance for

the whole State, it is extremely risky to comment on or generalise regarding the quality of the urban enumeration. Cachar, Goalpara, Sibsagar and Tripura State present a clean slate regarding this error. Kamrup again carries the palm, reporting two-thirds of such fictitious entries 10 out of a total of 15, 4 in the rural and 6 in the urban areas. Except Kamrup, no district shows a larger number of fictitious entries than 2, e.g., Lakhimpur and Darrang report two each, whereas Nowgong is responsible for only one. One must bear in mind that the existence of this species of error in Assam in the present Census has little to do with any political propaganda or movement or rationing with its inevitable sequel of ghost ration cards, as rationing of rice is in force only in a few towns of Assam the number of which will not exceed half a dozen. The only explanation of these few errors of omissions and fictitious entries is the inefficiency and lack of sense of full responsibility on the part of a very, very small minority among our huge unpaid and ill-qualified enumerating staff.

Considering clear omissions and fictitious entries together, Lakhimpur comes first with a net error of 15 cases tending to under-enumeration as against Kamrup with its 11 similar cases. Sibsagar 8, Nowgong 6, Darrang 4 and Goalpara 2 show only a moderate amount of net under-enumeration error.

(5) **Erroneous count of visitors and absentees:** The number of cases of erroneous count of visitors and absentees was only 1, which was totally cancelled by one error tending to over-enumeration, the net result, therefore, from the operation of opposing tendencies in this instance being exactly zero. Both the errors were in the rural areas, the districts reporting them being Goalpara (over-enumeration) and Sibsagar (under-enumeration). Taking both of these errors independently, the percentage of error in both these directions works out at 0.0175%. There was no error in this direction in Tripura. The small number of cases of errors of this nature and their insignificant extent, viz., two cases involving one person each in opposite directions, suggest that despite the longer census period of 20 days errors due to this cause are not a significant factor at all and in the final analysis completely cancel each other out. It is, therefore, reasonable to infer that the longer enumeration period with its more complicated instructions regarding the enumeration of visitors

and absentees has not on the whole, led to any significant inaccuracy and that the application of the formula that a person should be enumerated at his usual place of residence provided he was, or expected to be there at any time during 20 days' enumeration period has raised no practical difficulties. The every small number of errors of this type in our sample makes it risky to generalise any further in this regard.

(6) **Omission of occupied houses:** Under-enumeration could also occur by the failure of the enumerator to visit occupied households. An estimate of the error from this source was sought to be obtained by investigating whether the three houses nearest to the sample house were covered during enumeration. It was extremely gratifying to find no Verification Officer reporting the omission of an occupied house. The under-enumeration resulting from this cause is therefore, **absolutely nil so far as Assam and Tripura are concerned.** In some cases, it was gathered from the reports of the Verifying Officers that the three nearest houses as recorded in the Tabulation Offices from National Registers of Citizens are not always the nearest ones in the field. Instances were reported of some of these houses being more than a furlong away from the sample household concerned.

(7) **Overall Under-Enumeration:** The error in the Census count was compounded of cases of clear omissions (making for under-enumeration), fictitious entries (making for over enumeration), erroneous count of visitors and absentees (which could make for either over-enumeration or under-enumeration) and the omission of occupied houses (an error making for under-enumeration). Verification of the Census Count of non-household persons was, of course, not possible. According to the Census returns, 25,953 non-household persons were enumerated in Assam Plains Division, comprising only 0.33% of the total population of this Natural Division. The highest number was 7,306 found in Cachar, closely followed by Kamrup with its 7,549. The number of cases of clear omissions in Assam was 61, while the number of cases of fictitious entries was 15. As to the erroneous count of visitors and absentees, there was only one instance of such count tending to under-enumeration and another instance tending to over-enumeration, completely cancelling each other out. Hence the net result is one of clear omissions of 46 persons for the whole State. 52 net

omissions for the rural areas with 6 fictitious entries tending to over-enumeration for the urban areas. Thus for the whole State the estimated number of net omissions works out at 60,372, 68,815 being omissions in rural areas and 8,443 fictitious entries in urban areas. It should be noted that the State total has not been derived independently but has been obtained by adding the results of State rural and State urban. These actual results of the Sample Verification Scheme are embodied in Annexure I which is attached to Appendix 1, given at the end of this Volume. It clearly reveals that despite the huge overall increase in the population of Assam and Tripura recorded by the 1951 Census, the final error in the Census head-count lay in the direction of under-enumeration, not over-enumeration and that this error was of the dimension of 0.78% for Assam Plains Division as a whole. Its break-up for the rural and urban areas of the Division works out at 0.92% under-enumeration for the rural areas and 2.6% over-enumeration for the urban areas. The over-enumeration of urban area is confined only to the district of Kamrup, whereas the under-enumeration error is shared by all districts of this Division except Cachar which alone among the plains districts of Assam has returned a "no error" result. The greatest under-enumeration has occurred in Lakhimpur, to the extent of 1.62% of its enumerated household population, followed by Kamrup, 1.2%, and Nowgong 0.86%. Thereafter come Sibsagar and Darrang with their identical percentage rate of under-enumeration, viz., 0.64%. Goalpara has the least under-enumeration, showing only 0.27%. Allowing for these estimates of errors in the head-count of Assam Plains Division, the real population of Assam Plains Division comes to 7,865,930 (7,536,754 Assam Plains Rural and 329,176 Assam Plains Urban). The population of Assam Hills Division, exempted from the sample verification remaining the same, the estimated real population of the State of Assam will come to 9,104,079 (8,698,104 Assam Rural and 405,975 Assam Urban).

In Annexure I given in the Administration Report, (not reproduced in the shortened Annexure I in Appendix I in this Volume) I have attempted to work out independently for each district the estimated number of persons not enumerated and to give its estimated real population by adding the former to its censused figures. The results are given for whatever

they are worth. It should be noted that having been worked out independently for each district, these totals will not add up to those given for the Assam Plains. Great caution, therefore, must be exercised while using the districtwise break-up of columns 9, 11 and 12.

For Tripura the net degree of error is under-enumeration of 1,157 or 0.189 per cent of its household population. This is confined entirely to its rural areas. Thus the estimated real population of Tripura comes to 640,186 (rural 597,591 and urban 42,595). [Please note that the variation of 1,157 for rural Tripura has not been derived independently but is the variation of the State transferred here just as it was].

(8) **Conclusion :** It appears extremely fortunate that the Government of India accepted the necessity for a scheme of verification by random sampling of the 1951 Census. This has enabled me to estimate with confidence the degree of accuracy of the overall census count in the States of Assam and Tripura. The most important single result of the sample verification is that inspite of the huge increase in the population of Assam and Tripura, the actual figures are an under-estimate, though small in extent. It is clear that the doubts which the Registrar General harboured about the North-East India having increased less than was to be expected were well founded and that there was actually a slight amount of under-enumeration in the States of Assam and Tripura. The sample verification results also confirm my personal impressions and conclusions regarding the quality of census work in different plains districts of Assam. I was so highly impressed with the zeal and sincere work put in by the district authorities of Cachar that I had to allot to this district a slightly larger quota of silver and bronze medals for meritorious census services than its rightful share on a strictly population basis. A glance at the tabulated statement will completely justify this opinion. Goalpara comes a close second to Cachar in the degree of accuracy of its census. These are the two districts regarding which I had to make a last-minute change in instructions regarding the definition of 'land owned' and 'land rented'. The care they have taken to provide as complete a cover as possible is a good augury for expecting accurate results regarding individual questions as well. The statement also confirms my *a priori* impression that Kamrup was the worst district from the point of view of efficient census work. The large number of clear omissions and ficti-

tious entries which have come to light in spite of the fact that the sample was as large as one in a thousand is a definite indictment of the census work of this district. Lakhimpur closely follows Kamrup in this respect without the latter having any extraordinary circumstances to justify its inefficiency e.g. the 1950 earthquake and subsequent floods and havoc caused in the district of Lakhimpur. The disturbance caused by these natural calamities is plainly reflected in the accuracy of the Census results of this district as a whole, particularly its North Lakhimpur Sub-division. Still the district authorities can congratulate themselves that they have done so well in spite of immense national and natural calamities, in not revealing a larger margin of error. Darrang has done better than Nowgong, which in its turn has surpassed Sibsagar in the accuracy of its Census.

In view of the grave misgivings which I had from the very beginning about the complete cover or the lack of it in the case of Tripura, I went ahead with the full verification of all parts of Tripura State without availing of the exemption granted by the Registrar General for its hill areas. Tripura has revealed only one case of clear omission in its rural area with no other mistake of any kind like fictitious entries or erroneous count of visitors and absentees, both in the rural or urban areas. The district authorities of Tripura, who were responsible for the Census, have every reason for justifiable pride in this great achievement, clearly reflected in the result of sample verification of their State.

Finally, it should be remembered that in view of the fact that the sample was as large as 1 in 1,327, great care must be taken in utilising hastily any break-up of the overall figures of the State. I have contended myself with merely giving the estimated total population of the district without trying to give its break-up for rural and urban tracts. In my opinion, it is not safe to break up the district figures further. Even at the district level, the figures should be used with care and caution and not bandied about as if they guarantee perfect accuracy. On the basis of the results of the sample verification, I can assert with full confidence that the enumeration staff in Assam, Manipur and Tripura have done an extremely good job of work in 1951 in spite of the numerous calamities like the great Assam earthquake of 1950 and the subsequent floods as well as the economic and political difficulties like the anti-hoarding and procurement



drives and the anti-State efforts of the Communists in this year. It is clear that the 1951 Census, inspite of the very difficult circumstances prevailing in Assam and Tripura during the Census year, which often made me recall my predecessor's apt comparison of the course of census operations to that of true love, was as accurate as any of its predecessors, perhaps more so, and that the error is much less than one in one hundred. This is not just professional pride, nor departmental zeal which is but another form of self-praise, but a sober conclusion based upon the scientifically verified estimate of the accuracy of the 1951 Census Count in Assam and Tripura. I am deeply grateful not merely to the Governments of Assam, Tripura and Manipur for making their officers available to me for extra census duty but also to all these officers personally for carrying out this pioneer adventure in statistical sampling in the long history of decennial censuses of these states.\*

## 7. Natural Divisions :

### 7A. The All India Scheme of Union Population Zones, Natural Regions, Sub-Regions and Divisions.

It was customary in the past Census Reports of India to compile Subsidiary Tables and review census data not only for the political and administrative divisions of the country but also for what are called Natural Divisions. Though this system was followed as a matter of course, in State reports, it fell into disuse for All India purposes after 1911. The Registrar General, India, now considered it necessary to revive it for purposes of review of All India Tables as well, and has formulated a new All India Scheme, the main features of which are as follows :—

(i) **6 Union Population Zones:** India has been divided into the following 6 Union Population Zones by grouping together States on the basis primarily of contiguity and convenience for purposes of review; according to this all the three States of Assam, Manipur and Tripura with which this report is concerned fall in Zone II viz., East India.

\* See Appendix 1 for a detailed description of some of the difficulties that were encountered while carrying out the scheme of Sample Verification of the 1951 Census count in Assam and Tripura.

- (1) North India consisting of Uttar Pradesh;
- (2) East India " " Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim;
- (3) South India " Madras, Mysore, Travancore-Cochin and Coorg;
- (4) West India " " Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch;
- (5) Central India " " Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Vindya Pradesh;
- (6) North-West India " " Rajasthan, Punjab, PEPSU, Kashmir, Ajmer, Delhi, Bilaspur and Himachal Pradesh.

(ii) **5 Natural Regions:** Independently of this division of the country into 6 Union Population Zones, the Registrar General's scheme again divides the country into 5 "Natural Regions" based solely on physical features, and without reference to material difference in soil and rainfall conditions.

(iii) **15 Natural Sub-Regions:** These five "Natural Regions" are divided into 15 "Natural Sub-Regions" on the basis of substantial differences within each Natural Region, in respect primarily of soil and rainfall conditions, and also taking into account differences in the cropping pattern.

(iv) **52 Natural Divisions:** These 15 Natural Sub-Regions are further sub-divided into 52 "Natural Divisions" on the basis primarily of inter-section of "Sub-Regions" with existing political divisions.

The All India Scheme of Natural Divisions can, therefore, be summarised in the statement below :—

#### Summary of the All India Scheme of Natural Divisions

No.	Name of Natural Region	Number of Natural Sub-Region	Natural Divisions
(1)	Himalayan Region.	2	10
(2)	Northern Plains Region.	4	13
(3)	Peninsular Hills and Plateau Region.	5	18
(4)	Western Ghats and Coastal Region.	2	8
(5)	Eastern Ghats and Coastal Region.	2	3
		15	52
			plus Bay Islands
			Total 53

## 7B. Assam, Tripura and Manipur in the All India Scheme :

The first Natural Division called the Himalayan Region, or, the extra Peninsular Region of India, is formed of the mighty Himalayan mountain ranges. It is a region of tectonic or folded and over-thrust mountain chains of geologically recent origin. Its rivers are in the youthful stage with precipitous courses, actively eroding their banks into steep-sided valleys and gorges. It consists of two Sub-Regions, (1) the Western Himalayan Sub-Region and (2) the Eastern Himalayan Sub-Region, which are further sub-divided into the following 10 divisions :—

### 1.1 Western Himalayan Sub-Region :

- 1.11 Himalayan Uttar Pradesh Division.
- 1.12 Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur Division.
- 1.13 Himalayan Punjab Division.
- 1.14 Jammu and Kashmir Division.

### 1.2 Eastern Himalayan Sub-Region :

- 1.21 Assam Hills Division.
- 1.22 Assam Plains Division.
- 1.23 Manipur Division.
- 1.24 Tripura Division.
- 1.25 Himalayan West Bengal Division.
- 1.26 Sikkim.

Thus all the three States of Assam, Tripura and Manipur are included under the Eastern Himalayan Sub-Region, which includes Sikkim and the Himalayan West Bengal Division as well. Assam again has been divided into two Natural Divisions, viz., (i) Assam Hills and (ii) Assam Plains, which comprise within themselves the following districts :—

#### Assam Plains Division :

Cachar, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

#### Assam Hills Division :

United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills, Lushai Hills, Garo Hills, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, Mishmi Hills, Abor Hills, Tirap Frontier Tract, Balipara Frontier Tract and Naga Tribal Area.

For a detailed description of these two natural divisions as well as those of Manipur and Tripura, please refer to Appendix 2.

## 7C. Past Practice regarding Assam :

It was usual for my predecessors to divide the old province of Assam into 3 Natural Divisions as follows :—

(1) The Brahmaputra Valley.—consisting of the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Mishmi Hills, Tirap Frontier Tract and Balipara Frontier Tract.

(2) The Surma Valley.—consisting of the districts of Sylhet and Cachar Plains.

(3) The Hills.—consisting of the Garo Hills, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, North Cachar Hills, Naga Hills, and Lushai Hills. They did not exclude the Mikir Hills, portions of Nowgong, and Sibsagar from the Brahmaputra Valley for treatment under the Hills; on the other hand they used to include the neighbouring native State of Manipur under the Hills Division of Assam.

## 7D. Causes of the present two-fold division :

As the Sylhet referendum followed by the Radcliffe Award resulted in by far the larger portion of the Sylhet District going to Pakistan, the major portion of the Surma Valley ceased to be part of Assam; only a remnant of this old Natural Division, viz., the Cachar district as now constituted (including the new truncated subdivision of Karimganj with the thanas of Patharkandi, Ratabari and Badarpur and a portion of Karimganj thana), now remains in Assam. Cachar, though a distinct natural unit, is too small to merit separate treatment from the point of view of Subsidiary Tables and is, therefore, tagged on to the plains districts of the old Brahmaputra Valley to form the present new division of Assam Plains in the new All India Scheme.

## 7E. New and Old Scheme of Natural Divisions in Assam compared.

The present scheme of Natural Divisions in Assam differs from the 1931 scheme in several respects. Instead of three Natural Regions of the 1931 and previous censuses, Assam is now divided into only two broad Natural Regions—Assam Plains and Assam Hills.

(i) The new Assam Plains division excludes the Frontier Tracts of Mishmi Hills, Abor Hills, Tirap Frontier Tract and Balipara Frontier Tract, all of which were included under the Brahmaputra Valley previously. On the other



hand, it now includes Cachar, which, the old Brahmaputra Valley did not. For the first time the 1951 Census separates Mikir Hills Excluded Areas of Nowgong and Sibsagar from the parent districts and treats them separately as parts of the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills under Assam Hills.

(ii) The Surma Valley Natural Region of the previous Census Reports has now been abolished altogether. Though Cachar is in many respects different from any of the plains districts of the Brahmaputra Valley in historical, racial, geographical and linguistic aspects, it is included under the Assam Plains for the purposes of convenience of review, even at the risk of introducing an element of 'unnaturalness' in the scheme of Natural Divisions.

(iii) The present Assam Hills division includes the Frontier Tracts of Abor Hills, Mikir Hills, Tirap and Balipara Frontier Tracts, all of which were so long treated under the Brahmaputra Valley. It also includes the new tract of Naga Tribal Area for the first time at the present census, but excludes Manipur which is treated throughout the present report independently as a separate Natural Division. Again the Mikir Hills areas of Nowgong and Sibsagar are included under this new subdivision for the first time for purposes of all census Tables, an achievement which the past censuses could not boast of.

From the above description and discussion it is clear that no particular stress should be given to the word "natural" in considering the above groupings which should be regarded only as a broad and convenient generalisation. "Convenience" would be a more applicable adjective for our scheme of Divisions for while the convenience of the Division is obvious its naturalness is subject to some qualification. An element of unnaturalness we have already seen in tagging Cachar to the plains districts of the Brahmaputra Valley, in spite of its having a different historical background and distinct geographical, linguistic and racial characteristics. The unnaturalness becomes all the more glaring when we find that Cachar has no physical link with any of the remaining area which forms the new Assam Plains Division. The blocks of Mikir and North Cachar Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Naga Hills effectively separate it from any of the plains districts of the

Brahmaputra Valley. To achieve closer approximation might have involved going within the district boundary; thus making it difficult for us to have any convenient basis of treatment and comparison.

Similarly Assam Hills Division contains Lushai Hills which is entirely separate and unconnected with its other portions, due to the effective screen formed by the Cachar plains. As the figures of the small plain portions of the Tribal Areas were not kept separate and as their merger took place only after 1st March 1951, the census data of all these N.E.F.A. tracts continue to be shown under the Hills Division against their parent hill tracts and not under their new plains districts. This introduces another element, though small in effect, of artificiality in our scheme of Divisions.

#### 7F. Manipur and Tripura :

Manipur and Tripura being Part 'C' States will be treated throughout this report separately as independent units. They form two separate Divisions of the Eastern Himalayan Sub-Region. Manipur especially, whose data used to be included in Assam Tables thus comes into its own for the first time. A similar fate was Tripura's from its treatment with Bengal, from which it is rescued for independent treatment, befitting its new status as a Part 'C' State.

For a fuller description of the Natural Divisions, please refer to Appendix 2 on Natural Regions given at the end of this Volume.

#### 8. Climate, Soil and Geology :

Appendix 2 contains the climatological data, soil classification and geological summary of the Natural Divisions of Assam as well as of Manipur and Tripura. It will be found helpful in comparing with the statistical data later about the problems of sustenance and population growth and of the existence of different industries in the different States or parts thereof. The climatological and geological information has been very kindly made available by the Meteorological Department and the Geological Survey of India at the instance of the Registrar General. The soil classification data has been summarised from the District Gazetteers.

#### 9. Political Divisions :

Previously Assam was divided for administrative purposes into two Commissioners' Divisions; the North East Frontier Tracts were

under the direct charge of the Governor as the Agent of the Governor General and of the Government of Assam as the Agent of the Government of India after 15th August, 1947. The two Commissioners' Divisions were reduced to one before the beginning of the decade and this one too was abolished in August, 1947. The Government of Assam by "The Distribution of Commissioners' Powers and Functions Act of 1947" have distributed the powers and functions of the Commissioner to various authorities including Deputy Commissioners, Development Commissioner and the State Secretariat. As a result the Deputy Commissioners in charge of both the plains and hills districts of Assam deal in all matters directly with the Government.

Prior to the 15th August, 1947, the hill areas, viz., the North East Frontier Tracts, the Naga Hills, the Lushai Hills and the North Cachar Hills were directly administered by the Governor in his discretion, while in the case of the Garo Hills, the Mikir Hills and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (except the areas within the Shillong Municipality and Cantonment), the Governor acted in his individual judgement. The semi-independent Khasi Hill States were under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor as Agent to the Crown Representative/the Government of India. With the transfer of power on the 15th August, 1947, the administration of all these areas (except the Khasi Hill States) devolved entirely on the Ministry, the Governor having no "discretionary" and "individual judgement" powers under the Government of India Act, 1935, as adapted. The Khasi Hill States have subsequently been merged in the State of Assam with effect from the 26th January, 1950, by virtue of the provisions of para 20(2) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Under the present Constitution of India, the hills districts and frontier tracts are declared as tribal areas within the State of Assam. As laid down in Article 244(2) of the Constitution, the administration of the tribal areas of the State is governed by the provisions of its Sixth Schedule.

#### 9A. Part A Tribal Areas—Autonomous Districts :

Such tribal areas as are specified in Part A of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the said Sixth Schedule, viz.,

- (1) The United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District,
- (2) The Garo Hills District,
- (3) The Lushai Hills District,
- (4) The Naga Hills District,
- (5) The North Cachar Hills and
- (6) The Mikir Hills,

are called autonomous districts in as much as provision has been made for the exercise of autonomy by the tribal people of these districts in certain specific matters—executive, legislative and financial, as provided for in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. In the Lushai Hills district, there has been constituted an autonomous region called the Pawi-Lakher autonomous region to exercise certain autonomous functions within that region. Each autonomous district or the autonomous region will have a District Council or a Regional Council, as the case may be, elected on adult franchise. Such a District Council/Regional Council is the executive and legislative authority in autonomous spheres. Each autonomous district except the North Cachar Hills and the Mikir Hills is in charge of a Deputy Commissioner. With effect from the 17th November, 1951, an administrative district called the United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills has been formed by combining the two autonomous districts, viz., the North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills, into a new administrative district and this new district has been placed in charge of one Deputy Commissioner.

Along with the general elections at the beginning of 1952, elections were also held for the membership of District Councils under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Elected District Councils have now been set up in all the autonomous districts of Assam except the Naga Hills District. They have replaced *ad hoc* nominated District Advisory Councils which were purely advisory bodies. As a result of these changes, it is now for the citizens of these districts to make or mar their own future as regards their internal management, finance, culture, way of life and self-government.

Since 10th May, 1950, a new separate Tribal Areas Department under a Secretary has been set up in the Assam Secretariat to deal with all the affairs of these autonomous districts. It is hoped that this new arrangement will be conducive to the increased welfare and progress of the tribals in the autonomous areas. After the independence of India, with active assistance and help of the Central Government, the Government of Assam have laid down a programme of improving communications in these tribal areas which will form the basis of their future prosperity and progress and will open up the areas for commerce and trade with the outside world and also break down their age-old isolation which was often artificially preserved and fostered in the past.

The Constitution has vested these District and Regional Councils with wide executive, legislative and taxation powers. They have powers to make law in respect of:—

- (i) the administration of land;
- (ii) the management of any forest not being a reserved forest;
- (iii) the use of any canal or water-course for the purpose of agriculture;
- (iv) the regulation of the practice of jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation;
- (v) the establishment of village or town committees or councils and their powers;
- (vi) any other matter relating to village or town administration including village or town police and public health and sanitation;
- (vii) the appointment or succession of Chiefs or Headmen;
- (viii) the inheritance of property;
- (ix) marriage;
- (x) social customs.

They have also certain powers under the Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedures, with power to constitute village councils and courts and to prescribe their procedure for the trial of suits and cases if all the parties belong to the Schedule Tribes within their own areas.

No Act of State Legislature in respect of matters falling within the purview of the District Councils can apply to the autonomous districts unless the District Councils by public notification so direct.

They have the following powers of taxation:—

- (1) To assess and collect land revenue.
- (2) Taxes on lands and buildings and tolls on persons resident within their areas.
- (3) Taxes on professions, trades, callings and employments.
- (4) Taxes on animals, vehicles and boats.
- (5) Taxes on entry of merchandise into a market for sale and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries.
- (6) Taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads.

They have also power to regulate and control money-lending or trading within the autonomous districts.

#### 9B. Part-B Tribal Areas :

The Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, who looks after the autonomous districts of Assam acts under the State Government. The Part-B Tribal Areas of Assam are, however, administered directly by the Governor of Assam (acting in his discretion) as Agent of the President, and are at present under the External Affairs Ministry of the Government of India. These areas specified in Part B of the Table given in Article 20 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution are:—

1. Mishmi Hills
2. Abor Hills
3. Tirap Frontier Tract
4. Balipara Frontier Tract
5. The Naga Tribal Area

All these districts are now collectively known as the North East Frontier Agency (N.E.F.A.). As a result of the new administrative arrangements, the Adviser acting under the Governor is concerned with the Part B Tribal Areas only and the autonomous Districts of Assam are now the responsibility of the State Government acting through the Secretary of their Tribal Affairs Department. The unwieldy Balipara Frontier Tract has been divided into two parts—the Se La Agency and the Subansiri Area—for its better administration. Since Independence a lot of administrative activity is evident in these tribal areas. They also have witnessed a number of nation-building institutions springing up as a result of Government's determination to do their very best for the welfare of the tribals in these far-off and hitherto-forgotten regions.

Roads, Education, Agriculture, Forest, Irrigation and Medical departments have been either created in the outlying districts or are being strengthened, if already there. Thus an attempt is being made to infuse new life and vigour into the tribals inhabiting the vast area of 34,969\* square miles on the extreme North Eastern frontier of India.

#### 10. Rural Panchayats in Assam:

An interesting development in the post-Independence Assam is the rural development plan of the Assam Government, according to which 710 Rural Panchayats are envisaged (each with a population of 10,000 more or less) to cover the entire State of Assam. The Assam Rural Panchayat Bill of 1948 received the assent of the Governor General of India in November 1948 and became law in December, 1948. Under the provisions of this Act, Rural Panchayats are to be established in the rural areas of the State of Assam, each covering a population of about 10,000. The main consideration governing the formation of these Panchayats is that each of them should be a compact and, as far as practicable, economically self-sufficient block and that even the remotest house included within its area of operation should not be more than two and a half miles to four miles from the rural development centre. Under the Assam Rural Panchayat Amendment Act 1952, the basis of population has been increased to 20,000 according to the direction of the Planning Commission and consequently the area has been enlarged making the distance from the development centre greater. According to the latest plan of the Government, it is contemplated to have in selected areas only 98 Rural Panchayats till 1956-57, out of which 51 Rural Panchayats have been formed upto now (August 1952). Even with the proposed increase in population, 98 Rural Panchayats cannot cover the entire State. Nothing has been decided at present regarding the formation of more panchayats after 1956-57, in view of the financial difficulties of the State Government and uncertain help from the Centre under the Five Year Plan.

After a Rural Panchayat is formed, a trained Rural Panchayat secretary is placed in charge of the Panchayat Office. The District and the Sub-Divisional Officers further sub-divide the

Panchayat areas into smaller units called Primary Panchayats, each such Primary Panchayats comprising some homogeneous villages. Under the amended bill the number of Primary Panchayats under each Rural Panchayat is restricted to five. The adult members of the constituent units were to elect one representative to the Rural Panchayats for every two hundred of their population under the Principal Act, but in view of the Amending Act, every five hundred of their population will elect one representative to the Rural Panchayat. This representative Assembly will elect its own President and Vice-President. Besides this parent body, each Primary Panchayat has its own Primary Executive Committee to run its own affairs.

As soon as a Primary Panchayat is formed, a properly trained salaried secretary is appointed and his chief work besides acting as the Registrar of births, deaths and marriages is to make a house to house survey of the number of persons, the land possessed by each household, the amount and type of agricultural produce, the cottage industries practised, etc. On the basis of information gathered, the Rural Panchayat will formulate the economic plan of the whole area. This plan will deal among other things with the crops to be raised, and their marketing, the cottage industries to be sponsored and developed, methods for disposing of the products thereof, and in all possible way to make the area economically self-sufficient. In all these tasks it was expected that new Primary Trading Co-operatives contemplated under the Rural Development Plan will play a great part, specially, in importing into the area all goods required by the people from outside and buying from the villagers the surplus agricultural and cottage industries products and to market them profitably in the interest of the members. This Primary Trading Co-operative was to function as the economic sinews of the unit, of which the Panchayat cabinet under the Chairman of the Rural Panchayat forms the administrative and executive counterparts. The principle of decentralisation of power and economy has been secured as above while administration of justice was to be separated and popularised by the institution of "Panchayati Adalat" with each constituent on the basis of election of members of the 'Adalat' by the adult population. But the State Government have not considered the time opportune to constitute such "Adalats".

\* With the merger of its plains portions with Lakhimpur and Darrang, its area is 33,597 square miles, after 1.3.51.

To sustain the whole framework, a co-ordinating body called Rural Development Board has been set up in each sub-division for co-ordinating the rural development work within the Panchayat areas.

### **Primary Trading Co-operatives and Central Trading Co-operatives**

The Trading Co-operatives were established throughout the province before the Panchayats were formed and they took up the work of distribution of cloth, yarn and other controlled goods. The main functions of the Primary Trading Cooperatives are as follows :—

- (i) to import into the area of operation all commodities required by members;
- (ii) to facilitate trade within the area of operation by providing sales and purchase centres;
- (iii) to export the surplus production of members outside the area of operation;
- (iv) to provide banking facilities to members; and
- (v) to provide insurance facilities to members.

The average population to be covered by a co-operative is 10,000 persons whereby each society is to have a membership of 2,000 taking five persons as the average size of a family. The membership of the trading co-operatives is open to both individuals and the primary single purpose co-operative societies already mentioned. Central Trading Co-operatives were formed by the affiliation of Primary Trading Co-operatives on a regional basis. They buy wholesale the goods required by the affiliates and market their surplus products. The membership of these central trading co-operatives is open to individuals, "Agency Members" and the Primary Trading Co-operatives. These Central Trading Co-operatives generally function as wholesale dealers and Government stockists of controlled commodities.

For more details regarding the work and mechanism of these Trading Corporations, the reader is referred to "Co-operation in Assam (A New Experiment)," a recent booklet published by the Reserve Bank of India, Bombay.

### **11. Reference to Statistics :**

The main Census Tables prepared at the 1951 Census are contained in Parts II-A and II-B of this Report in two separate volumes. The method of preparing these tables, the system of classification adopted and the problem of comparability with the previous Census Tables are dealt with in the Registrar-General's Memorandum No. 693/50-R.G., dated the 2nd July, 1950, reproduced in Appendix 3.

The main Tables with which this Chapter is primarily concerned are—

- A.1 Area, Houses and Population,
- A.2 Variation in Population During the Last 50 years; and
- A.3 Towns and Villages Classified by Population, and
- E.—Summary figures by Districts and Thanas.

The Subsidiary Tables prepared from the main Tables and from other available statistics are given in Part I-B of this Report. This Chapter reviews the 8 Subsidiary Tables 1.1 to 1.8, mentioned below :—

- (1) 1.1—Area and Population, Actual and percentage, by Tahsil Density.
- (2) 1.2—Variation and Density of General Population.
- (3) 1.3—Mean Decennial Growth-rates during three Decades-General Population.
- (4) 1.4—Immigration.
- (5) 1.5—Emigration.
- (6) 1.6—Migration between the State and other Parts of India.
- (7) 1.7—Variation in Natural Population.
- (8) 1.8—Livelihood Pattern of General Population.

Table 1.1 corresponds to Subsidiary Table II in Chapter I of the 1931 Census Report except that the 1951 Table gives greater details about the distribution of the population according to the density. As the natural divisions and several districts have undergone changes in their areas, there will be no direct comparability between the figures of 1931 and 1941 with those of 1951. I have prepared a separate Subsidiary Table 1.1A giving the 1941 position according to the present areas with due adjustments for the population. Subsidiary Table 1.2 corresponds to Subsidiary Table III in Chapter I of the 1931 Report. The main Table A-I gives the actual area but Subsidiary Table 1.2 which deals with density takes into account only the fully censused areas,

which alone can be the basis of determining the density, not the actual or the over-all mapped area. Subsidiary Table 1.1 also dealing with the distribution of population according to thana density takes into account the regularly censused areas only but with this difference—the thana areas are not supplied by the Surveyor General; hence the thana areas given in this Table will not add up to the Surveyor General's totals for the State, Natural Divisions or districts, but only to those given by the State Survey Departments. Subsidiary Table 1.3 about mean decennial growth rates during three decades is new and a note explaining how this Table has been prepared is attached to it. Subsidiary Tables 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 about immigration and emigration correspond to Subsidiary Table I, Chapter III—Birthplace and Migration— of the 1931 Report. Subsidiary Table 1.7 relates to the variation in natural population. The figures of immigrants for 1931 required for this Table have been extracted from Table VI—Birthplace

of the 1931 Census Report, Part II; while the figures of emigrants for 1931 are adopted from the Subsidiary Tables of Chapter III of the Census Report 1931, Part I. Subsidiary Table 1.8 is entirely new and gives the livelihood pattern of the general population on the basis of the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme, which is fully reproduced with all annexures in Part II-B of the Report.

In addition to the Tables mentioned above, certain additional Tables are also included in Part I-B of the Report, relating to the migrants and their livelihood classification, population growth in Kamrup and Goalpara, distribution of World Population and Land, growth of population in different countries of the World during the last four half-centuries, growth of population in India and Pakistan during the last half-century and Mean Decennial Growth Rates of India, Burma and Pakistan (1871-1920) etc., etc.

## SECTION II

### GENERAL DISTRIBUTION AND DENSITY

#### 12. Area and Population of Assam compared with other States :

TABLE 1.4

*Area, Population and Density of Part 'A' States and some countries of the World*

S. No.	State/Country	Area in square miles (000's omitted)	Rank in order of area	Population (millions)	Rank in order of population	Density per square mile	Rank in order of density
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Part 'A' States of India.</b>							
1	Assam .. ..	85.0*	5	9.0	9	176	8
2	Bihar .. ..	70.3	6	40.2	3	572	2
3	Bombay .. ..	111.4	4	35.9	4	233	7
4	Madhya Pradesh ..	130.3	1	21.2	6	163	9
5	Madras .. ..	127.8	2	57.0	2	447	4
6	Orissa .. ..	60.1	7	14.6	7	244	6
7	Punjab .. ..	37.4	8	12.6	8	338	5
8	Uttar Pradesh ..	113.4	3	63.2	1	557	3
9	West Bengal ..	30.8	9	24.8	5	806	1
<b>India and some countries of the World.†</b>							
1	India .. ..	1,269.6	..	356.8	..	281	..
2	U. S. S. R. .. ..	8598	..	193.0	..	22	..
3	China .. ..	3759	..	463.5	..	127	..
4	U. S. A. .. ..	3022	..	151.7	..	51	..
5	Canada .. ..	3690	..	13.8	..	4	..
6	Pakistan .. ..	933	..	74.0	..	210	..
7	Japan .. ..	142	..	82.9	..	588	..
8	U. K. .. ..	94	..	50.6	..	544	..
9	Belgium .. ..	12	..	8.6	..	720	..

\* Density shown here is calculated on the censused area which was only 51,415 square miles.

† Density of non-Asian countries is calculated on Land Area figures.

Sources : (i) Year Book of Food and Agricultural Statistics (1949).

(ii) Population and Vital Statistics Reports (1952)

Table 1.4 gives a comparative statement for area, population and density of India, its Part 'A' States and some other countries. With an area of 85,012 square miles, it is fifth among Part 'A' States, Madhya Pradesh with 130,272 being first, Madras (127,790) second, Uttar Pradesh (113,409) third, and Bombay (111,434) fourth. Assam with nearly 1/15th of the total land surface of India thus gives a good account of itself here; its position regarding population which is barely 1/40th that of India, is quite different. Uttar Pradesh has the largest population (63.2 million) followed at a respectable distance by Madras (57), Bihar (40) and Bombay (36), Assam with just over 9 million

occupying the very last rank among Part 'A' States. Apart from Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan with 130,207 square miles is the only Part B State of India that surpasses Assam in area, but in population Hyderabad (18.6), Travancore-Cochin (9.3) and Mysore (9.1) also surpass it. Thus Assam exceeds Hyderabad (82,168 square miles) in area but falls below Travancore-Cochin or even Mysore which have an area of only 9 and 29 thousand square miles respectively.

Among other countries of the world, it is nearly equal to the United Kingdom in area and has a population exceeding 8.6 million of Belgium.

### 13. Area and Population of Manipur and Tripura compared with other Part 'C' States

TABLE 1.5

*Area, Population and Density of Manipur and Tripura, compared with other Part 'C' States of India*

Serial No.	State	Area in square miles (000's omitted)	Rank in order of area	Population (millions)	Rank in order of population	Density per square mile	Rank in order of density
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Ajmer .. ..	2.42	7	.69	5	287	2
2	Bhopal .. ..	6.88	5	.84	4	122	7
3	Bilaspur .. ..	.45	10	.13	10	278	3
4	Coorg .. ..	1.59	8	.23	9	145	6
5	Delhi .. ..	.58	9	1.74	2	3,017	1
6	Himachal Pradesh .. ..	10.45	3	.98	3	94	8
7	Kutch .. ..	16.72	2	.57	8	34	10
8	Manipur .. ..	8.63	4	.58	7	67	9
9	Tripura .. ..	4.03	6	.64	6	158	4
10	Vindhya Pradesh .. ..	23.60	1	3.57	1	151	5

Table 1.5 tells us at a glance about the position of Manipur and Tripura among other Part 'C' States of India both with reference to area and population. Regarding area,

Manipur and Tripura resemble Bhopal while from the point of view of population they approximate each other or Ajmer or Kutch.

### 14. Distribution of Area and Population in the Natural Division:

TABLE 1.6

*Distribution of Area and Population into Natural Divisions (actual and percentage) of Assam*

State or Natural Division	Area in square miles	Percentage of the area to the total area of the State	Population	Percentage of the population to the total population of the State
Assam	.. 85,012	100.0	9,043,707	100.0
Assam Plains	.. 23,033	27.1	7,805,558	86.3
Assam Hills	.. 61,979	72.9	1,238,149	13.
(a) Autonomous districts	.. 27,010	31.8	1,173,266	13
(b) N. E. F. A.	.. 34,969	41.1	64,833	0.7



Table 1.6 shows that Assam Plains contains an area of 23,033 square miles and a population of 7,805,558, against Assam Hills with 61,979 square miles and 1,238,149 persons, out of which the share of the 5 Autonomous Districts is 27,010 square miles and 1,173,266 persons, while that of the N. E. F. A. 34,969 square miles and 64,883 persons. The overwhelming maldistribution of Assam's area and population among its different Natural Divisions is patent to any one. Assam Plains with a little over 1/4th of the total area supports 6/7ths of the population, while the remaining 1/7th of the population has the entire 3/4th of the area to spread itself over. Con-

sidering the censused area of Assam (51,415 square miles) the disparity though slightly less, remains considerable. Assam Hills contain 55 per cent of the censused area. The Autonomous Districts of Assam contain 4 per cent larger area than Assam Plains, but their population is almost 1/7th that of the latter. It is now clear why Assam should be so thinly populated. With nearly 3/4ths of the entire area consisting of hilly, inhospitable regions, which never did and never can support a dense population anywhere in the world, Assam can never have a population as large as that of other Part 'A' States of India.

### 15. Distribution of Area and Population by districts

TABLE 1.7

*Distribution of Area and Population by districts in Assam*

No.	District	Area in square miles (000's omitted)	Rank in order of area	Population in lakhs	Rank in order of population	Density per square mile	Rank in order of density
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Cachar .. ..	2.7	15	11.2	3	415	1
2	Goalpara .. ..	4.0	9	11.1	4	278	6
3	Kamrup .. ..	3.8	10	14.9	1	387	3
4	Darrang .. ..	2.8	14	9.1	6	325	5
5	Nowgong .. ..	2.2	16	8.9	7	409	2
6	Sibsagar .. ..	3.5	11	12.1	2	351	4
7	Lakhimpur .. ..	4.1	8	10.8	5	265	7
8	United K. & J. Hills ..	5.5	6	3.6	8	66	11
9	Naga Hills .. ..	4.3	7	2.1	10	48	12
10	Lushai Hills .. ..	8.1	4	2.0	11	24	16
11	Garohills .. ..	3.2	12	2.4	9	77	10
12	United Mikir and North Cachar Hills ..	5.9	5	1.7	12	28	15
13	Mishmi Hills .. ..	9.4	2	0.3	13	82	9
14	Abor Hills .. ..	8.5	3	0.1	14	39	14
15	Tirap Frontier Tract ..	2.9	13	0.1	17	42	13
16	Balipara Frontier Tract ..	12.1	1	0.1	15	18	17
17	Naga Tribal Area ..	2.1	17	0.1	16	141	8

Table 1.7 gives a complete picture of the relative positions of the different districts of Assam with reference to their area, population and density. In area Balipara Frontier Tract\*, with 12,100 square miles, is the largest district in Assam. It alone contains 14.2 per cent. of the total area of the State. Two other districts of the N. E. F. A., viz., Mishmi Hills and Abor Hills stand 2nd and 3rd containing 11 and 10 per cent respectively of the total area of Assam.

Ignoring the districts which were mainly uncensused, the Lushai Hills district is first in area, with 8,149 square miles and the United Mikir-North Cachar Hills district second with 5,892 sq. miles. The first seven places, from the point of

view of area, are all usurped by hills districts. Lakhimpur (4,068) the largest among the plains districts occupies the 8th position. Excepting the largely uncensused Naga Tribal Area of the N. E. F. A., the last three ranks by area in Assam are occupied by the plains districts of Darrang, Cachar and Nowgong. Lakhimpur alone contains 17.7 per cent of the area of Assam Plains, followed by Goalpara and Kamrup with 17.3 and 16.7 per cent respectively.

Nowgong is the smallest plains district with 9.4 per cent. of the area of Assam Plains. In Assam Hills, Balipara Frontier Tract alone occupies very nearly 1/5th of the entire area of the division while Mishmi Hills and Abor Hills contain 15.2 and 13.8 per cent respectively against 13.2, 5.1 and 6.9 per cent of Lushai Hills, Garohills and Naga Hills respectively.

\* It has already been broken-up into 2 tracts:—(1) Se La Agency and (2) Subansiri Area.



### Distribution of Assam's population by districts

Here the position is completely different. As there can be no doubt about the precedence of Hills districts in area, there can be no doubt about the precedence of the plains districts in population. The first seven ranks by population are without any exception occupied by the plains districts as a matter of course. The population of no district in the Hills Division comes anywhere near that of even the least populated plains district of Assam. Kamrup with 14.9 lakhs harbours more people than the entire Assam Hills Natural Division and well merits the honour of being the most populous district in Assam, followed at considerable distance by Sibsagar (12.1) and Cachar (11.2). The least populous and the smallest among the plains districts of Assam is Nowgong with only 8.9 lakhs. The last five places regarding population are all occupied by the hilly districts of the N.E.F.A. primarily because they are sparsely populated and were censused only for a fraction of their total area. Among the Autonomous Districts, the United K. & J. Hills (3.6) harbouring the capital of the State is an easy first, followed at a respectable distance by Garo Hills (2.4). The Lushai Hills (1.96) followed by the newly formed district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills (1.65) bring up the rear.

### 16. Density of Assam and its Natural Divisions :

#### 16A. Density of Assam

Assam's density is 176 persons per square mile. A glance at Table 1.4 in paragraph 12 reveals Assam occupying the last place but one regarding density. The only Part 'A' State which it surpasses is Madhya Pradesh (163). In density Assam is nowhere near West Bengal (806), Bihar (572), or Uttar Pradesh (557).

TABLE 1.8

*Density of Assam and its Natural Divisions for 1951 and three preceding Censuses*

State/Natural Division.	1951	1941	1931	1921
1	2	3	4	5
Assam.	176	148	123	103
Assam Plains.	339	282	237	198
Assam Hills.	44	39	31	27

Perhaps Table 1.8 and the comparative figures quoted before may give some hasty readers a proof how Assam is a vast El Dorado and that a large additional population can easily be settled here only if the density of the hill areas were as high as that of Assam Plains, if not even higher, such as that of any major Part 'A' State of India!

The average density figure by itself means nothing; though, undoubtedly, it has a certain value as an index by which we can compare the population pressure of States in similar environment and stage of economic development. It would be not merely idle but misleading to compare the density of Assam Hills or Assam with that of Great Britain, Belgium, Germany or with some major Part 'A' States of the Union. For suitable comparison we can only consider States with more or less similar environment, *e.g.*, Burma, North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir or Rajasthan. In such cases alone, or in homogenous regions densities which are equivalent to the quotients of populations divided by total areas give sufficiently comparable or representative results. Where, however, the total area figures mask large and varying extent of mountains, forests, water, submontane areas and so on, which can never carry the same population as adjoining regions, the crude density figures lose much of their value and may positively be misleading, if not mischievous. The separation maintained in the Tables between Assam Hills and Assam Plains has its origin in the great difference in the conditions of the two regions; and these differences have a clear reflection in the densities and illustrate the truth of the above statement. We cannot fix up on any one natural or physical feature as conditioning density; in the density function many variables enter. These low density figures of Assam and Assam Hills are mainly due to the fact that the hills districts cover a large proportion of the total area of the State. More than one half the total censused area of the State of 51,415 square miles, (28,382 square miles or 55 per cent) is occupied by Assam Hills leaving only 45 per cent for the entire Assam Plains Division. These hilly, inhospitable mountainous areas with their *jhum* cultivation, great backwardness in means of communication and the almost complete absence of any industry, large or small, never did and never can, nor will ever support a dense population. The vast areas of waste, rivers, forests and hills in Assam will ever prevent it from being one of the great densely populated state of India.

Normally we associate a high density with an urbanised, industrialised economy (Bihar and East Bengal are notable exceptions). Assam is almost entirely rural with less than 5 per cent of its population living in towns. Many of these towns are hardly more than overgrown villages

with some administrative and commercial significance. Ignoring the small oil and coal mining industries in Lakhimpur, Assam's principal industry is Tea, which is rural in its nature and if not actually ruralizing in its effects, at least prevents the growth of towns. It requires vast areas of land under cultivation with a very small factory population and is not conducive to a dense population in a limited area. Though the density of Assam as a whole is only 176 persons per square mile, Assam Plains Division already supports a high density of 339 persons per square mile in spite of the vast extent of forest lands, rivers, waste, hills and sub-montane areas, etc., it contains. The density of Assam Hills Division is no doubt only 44 persons per square mile. This is mainly due to the fact that 'jhum' is the main form of cultivation in which land is allowed to lie fallow for a number of years which means that much larger areas are required to support the population on this shifting means of livelihood. When it is realised that agriculture under the most suitable conditions can hardly support more than 250 persons per square mile, we can straightway realise that Assam is not so low in density as it appears at first sight.

#### 16B. Density in the Natural Divisions of Assam :

Though Assam as a whole has a density of 176 persons per square mile, Assam Plains has a density as high as 339 persons per square mile against only 44 in Assam Hills. Thus Assam Plains is twice as dense as Assam and eight times denser its sister Natural Division of Assam Hills. There are no large industrial centres, cities or industries in Assam; yet the distribution of population varies enormously within the State, ranging from 14 persons per square mile in the Balipara Frontier Tract to over 750 in some parts of Assam Plains. We shall come up against these variations while discussing the growth of population in individual districts. Although they are being levelled up slowly, their persistence throughout the last half century and even earlier, ever since the beginning of the census operations in Assam, is not to be wondered at. The static conditions of fertile river valleys and vast areas of forest covered hills have combined with the dynamic effects of past invasions and wars, destructive earthquakes and epidemic diseases to bring about this end.

The highest density among the Autonomous Districts is found in the Garo Hills, 77 persons per square mile. There are several plain mauzas in this district which support a popula-

tion almost as dense as anywhere else in the Assam Plains; this, therefore, forces up its the density figure. The next highest density, viz., 66, is returned by the United K. & J. Hills district, mainly because of the presence within this district of Shillong with the cantonment (58,512) which is the capital of the State with the largest population of all towns in Assam. The density of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills is as low as 23 while the Lushai Hills takes the palm regarding low density, viz., 24 persons per square mile. The low density figures of the entire division or its individual districts need not conjure up visions of vast vacant lands crying out for more people to come and occupy their fertile fields. Most of the regions are inhospitable hills, practising jhum cultivation which can never support a dense population. Of course the replacement of jhum by permanent, irrigated and terraced cultivation is a possibility but it is not merely a remote one but can only be fulfilled at a tremendous and often prohibitive cost.

This will be even truer regarding the areas of the N. E. F. A.; if their population, both censused and estimated in whatever manner, is taken into consideration, their density can never be anything except very low. But from the point of view of their ability to support a dense population these areas can only be compared with the deserts of Sahara, Rajputana and Gobi or the mountainous regions of North West Frontier Province in Pakistan, or Jammu and Kashmir or the hilly areas of Madhya Pradesh. The very application of the concept of density to such regions is misleading. The figures given here are merely to satisfy the curious, not for any use by the practical businessman or administrator.

#### 16C. Assam Plains :

A glance at the density map given at the beginning of the volume shows that the density is greatest in the central portion of Assam Plains, viz., Nowgong, Cachar and Kamrup whereas it is low both at its eastern and western extremities, viz., Lakhimpur and Goalpara. The opening up of Lakhimpur by the tea industry would have gone far to obliterate the effect of historical causes leading to its low population and density but for the fact that immigration from Bengal increased so largely in the eastern districts in the last three decades as to maintain the distribution much as it was before.

Cachar, has the highest density in Assam, 415 persons per square mile, closely followed by Nowgong 409. At the other extremity stand Lakhimpur (265) and Goalpara (278). The density figures of all the Assam valley districts must be accepted with caution as many districts contain large areas of reserved forests. There is an enormous belt of reserve forests (902 sq. miles) running along the northern boundary of Goalpara (total area 3,985 sq. miles). If this be deducted, the density of Goalpara works out at 360, i.e., nearly 88 persons per square mile more than shown in Subsidiary Table 1.2. The whole tendency in the Assam Valley for many years has been for the density of the various districts to level up as the waste lands in the thinly populated districts or special divisions are filled by settlers. This still continues and several examples of this will be found in the account of individual districts given in the next section.

#### 16D. Ever increasing density :

Table 1.8 shows that the pressure of population even in a sparsely populated state like Assam is steadily increasing. The density of Assam which was 103 persons per square mile in 1921 shot up by 71 per cent to 176 in 1951; of course this increase in density is not evenly spread between its two Natural Regions or different districts. The density of Assam Plains has increased from 198 persons per square mile in 1921 to 339 in 1951, i.e., an increase of 141 persons for every square mile of its area within 3 decades or an increase of 71 per cent. The density of Assam Hills Division has increased from 27 in 1921 to 44 in 1951, i.e., an increase of only 63 per cent. Though the percentage increase in density in Assam Hills is not much less than in the Plains, it is actually an increase of 17 persons only per square mile in Assam Hills during the three decades, against 141 in Assam Plains during the same period. These figures point unmistakably to an ever-increasing pressure of population even in this easternmost State of India.

#### 16E. The density of Assam compared with that of some other countries :

The number of persons per square mile supported by Assam (176), Assam Plains (339) and India (281) may be compared with those of China (123), U.S.S.R. (23), U.S.A. (50), Pakistan (210), Japan (577). In this connection a thoughtful reader may well ponder over the following comments in the United Nations Report on

World Population Trends.\* "The density of the population of Asia is extremely high, though great variations appear in this vast area. Asia including the Asiatic parts of the U.S.S.R. has an area somewhat smaller in size than that of Europe including the whole of the U.S.S.R., yet in 1949 it maintained a population more than twice that of the latter. Over the entire area the average number of persons per square kilometre was 47 notwithstanding the fact that the Near East covering slightly less than one fourth of the total area was relatively sparsely populated. In some regions of Asia average densities varied from 12 persons per square kilometre (31 per square mile) in the "Near East" to as high as 223 persons per square kilometre in Japan. This may be compared with a figure of 18 for the world as a whole. The density of population in South Central Asia was more than twice that in the whole of Asia, excluding the U.S.S.R. while it was nearly six times as thickly populated as the world as a whole".

#### 16.F Density of Manipur and Tripura :

The density of Manipur, which was 45 in 1921 has increased to 67 in 1951, showing an increase of 22 in 30 years. In density and its gradual growth during the last 4 census years, the figures of Manipur are almost identical with those of the district of Naga Hills of Assam.

The density of Tripura which was 76 in 1921 is now 158, an increase of over 100 per cent. In simpler language it means that Tripura supports more than double the number of persons for every square mile of its area than it did 30 years ago. (See Table 1.5 for their relative positions among Part C States).

#### 17 District density:

Subsidiary Table 1.2 gives the density of general population in the districts over the last 3 decades. The densest district in Assam is now Cachar (415) closely followed by Nowgong (409). Kamrup (387) and Sibsagar (351) have fairly high densities. Previously the plains districts of the Brahmaputra Valley had a much smaller density than that of Cachar or Sylhet in the Surma Valley largely due to historical reasons. The civil wars and disturbances which marked the decay of the Ahom Kingdom, the Momaria Insurrection, and the subsequent invasion and

\* "World Population Trends 1920-1949" United Nation Demographic Year Book 1949-50, Chapter II p. 12.

capture of the Assam Valley by the Burmese, who massacred tens of thousands and are said to have carried off with them 30,000 slaves, ruined the country reducing the surviving inhabitants to abject misery. In spite of this initial setback inflicted by history in their population race, several plains districts of the Brahmaputra Valley have now caught up with Cachar. Only Lakhimpur (265) and Goalpara (278) have yet a long way to go to make up for their initial handicap. The figures of Subsidiary Table 1.2 illustrate both the utility as well as the futility of the concept of density as a measure of population pressure. From the point of view of total area and population, Nowgong comes last among all the districts of Assam Plains; only when their densities are considered we realise how the pressure of population in Nowgong is greater than anywhere else in the Assam Valley. The futility of the concept of density as a measure of population pressure is illustrated by the figures of Lakhimpur (265) or Goalpara (278). Both these districts, as we shall later see, have large submontane areas and reserved forests which are only thinly populated. With reference to density, Cachar and Lakhimpur have been consistent in occupying the highest and the lowest place in Assam in all the censuses since 1921. Nowgong, with a density lower than that of Kamrup or Sibsagar in 1941, has now surpassed both. The density of Goalpara was higher than that of Nowgong, in 1921—which may today appear very surprising.

The density of the hills districts of Assam with their vast area and small population is naturally very low. None of them has a density anywhere near 100 as we have seen, highest being 77 in Garo Hills, followed by 66 in United K. and J. Hills district, 48 in Naga Hills, 28 in the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and 24 only in Lushai Hills. It should be noted that these low densities are an advance over the figures of previous decades, showing an increasing pressure of population even in these hilly tracts. For example, the density of the United K. & J. Hills district was 44 and 52, that of Naga Hills 37 and 42, of Lushai Hills 12 and 15 and Garo Hills 57 and 60 in the years 1921 and 1931 respectively. With their limited economic and agricultural opportunities, even these slight increases may easily mean greatly increasing pressure of population on the soil. The density of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district

for the years 1921 and 1931 does not take into consideration the population of its Mikir Hills portions as it was not possible to separate it from that of the parent district, Nowgong and Sibsagar.

We have already noticed a tendency on the part of various plains districts of Assam to change their relative places regarding density in the last four censuses. The Hills districts however retain the same relative positions as regards density during the last 20 years. Thus Garo Hills always stood at the head of the hills districts, with United K. & J. Hills and Naga Hills second and third, followed by the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district. Lushai Hills, though one of the largest districts in India and the largest in Assam, excluding the N. E. F. Agency, has always been the last among the Autonomous Districts on account of its extraordinarily sparse population.

#### 18. Distribution of Population by Thana density in Assam:

From Subsidiary Table 1.1, we find that 14 per cent of the entire population of Assam lives in Thanas with a density below 100; 1.5 per cent in Thanas with densities ranging from 100 to 150; 6.6 per cent in the range 150 to 200; 12.1 per cent in the range 200 to 300; 41.3 per cent in the range 300 to 450; 6.7 per cent in the range 450 to 600; 8.6 per cent in the range 600 to 750 and 9.2 per cent in Thanas with a density of 750 and above. It will be helpful to consider the distribution by Thana density into the following 4 groups.

- (i) Low—Less than 150 persons per square mile;
- (ii) Medium—Ranging from 150 to 300 persons per square mile;
- (iii) High—Ranging from 300 to 600 persons per square mile;
- (iv) Very High—600 or more persons per square mile.

On the basis of this grouping, we find that only 15.5 per cent of Assam's population lives in the low density group; 18.7 per cent in the medium; nearly half of its entire population, (47.9 per cent) in high; whereas the very high density group contains nearly 1/5th of the entire population of Assam (17.8 per cent.). The distribution of Assam's area and population by Thana density can be summed up as follows:—

3/4th of the entire area of Assam supports only 1/3rd of its total population, leaving the remaining 2/3rds to be crowded into only 1/4th

of its area; or to put it differently over 3/4ths of Assam's population derives its sustenance from only 1/3rd of the area whereas the remaining 1/4th of the population has the remaining 2/3rd area to live on.

Subsidiary Table 1.1 brings out another extremely interesting feature. The area and population of Assam in the lowest density group, under 100, almost entirely consist of Assam Hills with only 1.9 per cent area and 0.4 per cent of the population of Assam Plains. The following Table compares the distribution of Assam's population into the four density groups with that of some other States :—

TABLE 1.9

*Distribution of areas of Assam, Assam Plains Divisions, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Madras into density groups*

		DENSITY GROUP			
		Low	Medium	High	Very high
Assam	..	15.5	18.7	48.0	18.0
Assam Plains	..	12.1	21.7	55.6	20.6
Orissa	..	14.2	27.2	40.2	18.6
Madhya Pradesh	..	24.5	54.1	19.2	3.2
Madras	..	2.6	14.2	31.4	51.8

Table 1.9 brings out the fact that the distribution of population in Assam by Thana density is more similar to that prevailing in Orissa than in Madhya Pradesh and Madras. This is just what we may expect considering the state of economic development and geographical factors in these four States of India. In Madhya Pradesh, which is nearly as sparsely populated as Assam, the largest portion of its population (54.1 per cent.) lives in the medium density group whereas in Assam the largest proportion (48 per cent) is in the high density group. That the pressure of population in some parts of Assam is much higher than that in Madhya Pradesh or even in Orissa is clear from the fact that 64 per cent of Assam's population live in areas of high or very high density. This percentage is only 58.8 in Orissa and as low as 22.4 in Madhya Pradesh. The densely populated and highly advanced State of Madras offers a striking contrast to the backward and the less populous Assam in practically all these respects. In Madras nearly 52 per cent of the population lives in Talukas, the density of each of which is 600 and above while another 31 per cent lives in Talukas, the density of which is 300 to 600. Only 2.6 per cent of the population of Madras lives in Talukas with a density below 150 against Assam's 15.5.

#### 19. Distribution of population by Thana density in Natural Divisions :

Let us first summarily dispose of the Assam Hills Natural Division. Practically its entire area as well as population are included in the lowest density group, viz., below 100. Only 0.2 per cent of its area and 0.6 per cent of its population are outside and they too are entirely within the next density group, 100 to 150. Even this can safely be ignored because it consists only of the area of 50 square miles of Naga Tribal Area with a population 7,025. No part of Assam Hills, either in the N.E.F.A. or in the Autonomous Districts, has anywhere a density higher than 77 which is found in Garo Hills alone. The high density of a fraction of Naga Tribal Area included in the group 100 to 150 is simply due to the fact that census operations were undertaken in the most convenient area, omitting the rest completely; hence this small aberration in the density distribution within Assam Hills. The density figures of 141 and 82 in Subsidiary Table 1.2 against Naga Tribal Area and Mishmi Hills, respectively are simply due to the fact that the census was confined to the most convenient plain portions alone, which therefore, do not share the outstanding characteristic of the Hilly areas, viz., their complete inability to support any dense population.

In sharp contrast with Assam Hills, the Assam Plains division has only 2 per cent of its area and 0.4 per cent of its population in the lowest density group, viz., under 100.

From Table 1.9 given in the preceeding paragraph we find that 12.1 per cent of the population of this natural division lives in the density group "low" against 21.7 in the "medium", 55.6 in the "high", and 20.6 in the group "very high". The largest portion both of its area and population, (45.3 and 47.9 per cent respectively), is found under the density group 300 to 450. It is interesting to find that 2/5ths of Assam Plains supports less than 1/4th of its population leaving the remaining 3/5ths of its area to support as much as 3/4ths of its population; 21 per cent of Assam's population lives on 9 per cent of its area only.

#### Districts by Thana Density :

This will be the logical place to discuss the distribution of population by Thana density in the districts of Assam. I have not done so and instead included the matter in the next Section while discussing the population growth of individual districts.

## SECTION III

## GROWTH

## 20. Growth of Population in Assam during last 50 years :

For Statistics please refer to para 11. I should only note here that Subsidiary Table 1.3 gives the Mean Decennial Growth Rates and not ordinary rates of percentage variation; the latter express the growth of population during the decade as a percentage of the population at the beginning of the decade. For comparing the growth of different States, the usual method is to compare the Mean Decennial Growth Rates, which are arrived at by expressing the difference between the general population totals of two successive censuses as percentage of the arithmetical mean of these totals. The difference involved is small, but is nevertheless necessary in order to ensure comparability of growth rates over long periods.

TABLE 1.10  
*Growth of Population in Assam during last 50 years*

Year	Population	Variation	Mean Decennial Growth Rate.	Density
1901	3,814,188	---	-	74
1911	4,482,864	668,676	16.1	87
1921	5,316,590	833,726	17.0	103
1931	6,344,456	1,027,866	17.6	123
1941	7,593,037	1,248,581	17.9	148
1951	9,043,707	1,450,670	17.4	176

From the demographic point of view, the decade 1891-1901, was the worst in the recorded census history of Assam. During this period Assam experienced an **actual** percentage rate of increase of 5.9 only, by far the lowest rate up-to-date (the nominal rate was, however, 11.8 due to the addition of new areas). Kala-Azar had wrought havoc in the central districts of the Assam Valley and wiped out a quarter of the entire population of the district of Nowgong. The demographic history for the whole of the present half-century after this is different from this sombre picture. Its first decade shows a Mean Decennial Growth Rate of 16.1 percent followed by 17 percent in the next. The last three decades show a slightly increasing Mean Decennial Growth Rate of 17.6 in 1921-31, 17.9 in 1931-41, and 17.4 in 1941-51. Thus the growth rate for the present decade shows a slight fall from the record rate registered for the decade 1931-41.

In terms of actual increments to its population, Assam increased by 6.7 lakhs in the first, 8.3 lakhs in the second and 10.3 lakhs in the third decade of the present century. The overall growth for the last two decades is 12.5 in 1931-41 and 14.5 in the past decade.

**Thus the total growth during the last two decades (27 lakhs) exceeds the combined increase of the first three decades (25.3 lakhs).**

The population of Assam in 1951 is 9,043,707 against 7,593,037 in 1941—giving a growth rate of 17.4 per cent during the last decade, higher than India's 12.5 and by far the highest among Part 'A' States of India, excepting Bombay (20.8). Table 1.14 may be referred to in this connection. From 3,814,188 in 1901, it has registered a total increase of 5,229,519 during the last half century, i.e., a total increase of 137 per cent which is among the highest recorded by any State during the same period. It gives an annual percentage rate of increase of 2.7 for this entire period, compared with that of Madras, 1.1 percent per annum, Madhya Pradesh 1.2, Travancore-Cochin 2.9, West Bengal 1.1, Uttar Pradesh 0.6, Orissa 0.4. For India as a whole, the annual growth rate for the period 1871-1951 is about 0.6 per cent. With the sole exception of Travancore-Cochin and ignoring the small Part 'C' States of Delhi and Tripura, Assam consistently gives the highest annual rate of increase of all States in India of today or of the past 50 years.

Now we are in a better position to realize the fact of tremendous and continuous growth in Assam's population during the last 50 years. The figures of Assam as it is to-day and as it was in the past 5 decades, its ever-increasing density, the substantial decennial increments in its numbers, its high growth rate (17 percent), compared with most States of India, measured in terms of Mean Decennial Rate or rate of percentage increase, or annual percentage of increase of 2.7 all these prove beyond any shadow of doubt a **history of tremendously accelerated growth of Assam's population during the entire period of the present century.**

## 20-A. Growth of Manipur and Tripura :

The population of Manipur in 1901 was 284,465 from which it to-day stands at 577,635. The total increase is, therefore, 293,170 or 103 per cent giving an average annual percentage rate of increase of 2.1. The



population of Tripura has shot up to 639,229 in 1951 from 173,325 in 1901, registering a total increase of 465,704 or 268.7 per cent, thereby giving a tremendous average annual percentage rate of increase of 5.4. This astonishing annual rate of increase of Tripura is exactly double the Assam rate and is by far the highest in the whole of the Union, excepting the special case of the Delhi State.

#### 21. Assam Growth figures require some adjustments :

The absolute figures in main Table A-II do not show the actual growth of the population of the 51,415 square miles of territory which we call Assam (regularly censused) today; they require some adjustments when we remember that new areas have been added to the State since 1901 and that no allowance for the population of these added areas has been made in the Table e.g. Assam as then constituted showed a percentage rate of increase of 11.8 in 1901 over its 1891 population, but the actual percentage increase was 5.9 only, if the increase due to the newly added areas was taken out. There are two ways in which we can examine the rate at which the State has grown. The first is to leave out all new territory added to the State during a particular decade and to show how much the previously censused area has increased. The other way is to endeavour to calculate the population which the area censused at the present census had at all previous censuses. The following table shows the calculations based on the first of these methods :—

TABLE 1.11  
*Growth rates real and nominal*

Period	Real growth rate	Growth rate shown by the census figures
1901-11.	15.5	16.1
1911-21	16.6	17.0
1921-31	17.5	17.6
1931-41	17.9	17.9
1941-51	17.6	17.4

Thus following the first method of calculation, the nominal Growth Rate shown by previous censuses will require to be adjusted to the extent varying from 0.6 for the decade 1901-11, 0.4 for 1911-21, 0.1 for 1921-31, and 0.2 per cent for 1941-51.

Between 1901 and 1911 a large number of Sema and Eastern Agami villages, with a total population of 39,586 was added to the district

of the Naga Hills, from the previously unadministered country. In 1921, the area censused for the first time, with its population, was :—

Some Khamti, Singpho, Abor and Mishmi villages east and north of Saidya Frontier Tract—14,400;

Naga tribes and Abor villages to the north of Lakhimpur 1,720; and Konyak territory to the north-east of Naga Hills district 7,400. In 1931, approximately 908 square miles of previously unadministered territory, having a population of 15,711 as shown below, was added to the regularly administered area :—

	Population	Area
(1) The Melomi-Primi area in the Kohima subdivision of the Naga Hills.	4,620	396 sq. miles.
(2) Six villages east of Mokokchung.	2,200	32 "
(3) The Zongling area to the south of the Lungleh subdivision, Lushai Hills.	1,696	160 "
(4) Various Abor and Naga villages in the Sadiya Frontier Tract.	7,195	320 "
Total.	15,711	908 "

No fresh territory was added to the old province of Assam in 1941. As already mentioned, at present 16 villages in Tuensang, Naga Tribal Area, with a population of 7,025 were censused for the first time. On the other hand, some villages of Mishmi Hills with an estimated population of 3,000, Abor Hills, (9,000) and Tirap Frontier Tract, (10,000), which were regularly censused in the past, were omitted as they fell within the Part B Tribal Areas. Hence there is a net under-estimate of growth to the extent of about 15,000 in the present decade. It is rather difficult to state with reasonable confidence and pretention to absolute accuracy what was the actual population at previous censuses of the 51,415 square miles which constitute Assam of to-day. Most of the areas censused today but omitted from the past censuses are tribal areas. These may have suffered a decline in their population from continual tribal warfare with the neighbouring villages as there was no sovereign power to keep them in check or from epidemics due to the complete absence of any medical or public health measures. On the other hand the tribal villages or at least a majority of them may have remained at

with themselves and others and continued to grow at a steady though slow rate. We simply do not now know and there are no means of finding out. The only thing we can be sure of is the fact that the numbers involved are small, and the adjustments required are purely minor. They are here referred to merely for the sake of pointing out a possible source of error.

## 22. Causes of the Tremendous Growth of Assam's population during the last 50 years :

Let us now briefly review decade by decade the causes of this tremendous increase in population registered by Assam during the last half century :—

### (A) 1901-1911 :

The first decade saw an overall increase of 6.68 lakhs, i.e., a mean decennial growth rate of 16.1 per cent. These are the lowest figures during the last five decades. This is largely due to the fact that Assam during this decade was still recovering from the terrible havoc wrought by Kala-Azar in the central districts of Assam Valley during 1891-1901 which had wiped out a quarter of the entire population of the district of Nowgong. The earth-quake of 1897 seemed to have sent a death wave over the State in the last year of the 1891-1901 decade. Both these factors caused heavy mortality at the extremities of life while people in the prime of life increased. The result was that the decade 1901-1911 had a more than normal increase in the population. The proportions of the old people and the young people who are more liable to a high mortality were diminished by 1901 and the decade started with more than normal proportions of persons in the reproductive period of life; accordingly, the mortality was lower than the average and the birth rate higher. The general peace and security prevailing in the hills of Assam were responsible for a considerable increase even in the hills. During the latter half of the decade the tea industry advanced from the condition of a continual struggle for existence to one of very substantial prosperity. Immigration which has always been a most important factor in the variation of population of Assam apparently began to be something more than a mere supply of the actual needs of the tea industry. The Census Report of 1911 mentions for the first time the commencement of a voluntary stream of settlers, then most in evidence at the outskirts of the Brahmaputra Valley but had ventured as far east as Tezpur and Nowgong. The

excessive mortality which was due to the jungly and insanitary conditions prevalent till then or due to unusual calamities seemed at last to have been reduced.

### (B) 1911-1921 :

During the decade 1911-21 progress in growth continued but its speed was retarded by various events of local importance and the universal influenza epidemic of 1918-19. There was hardly any improvement in the standards of life and the economic condition of the people was no better in 1921 than it was in 1911. In this decade there were three main factors which added largely to the population and one which greatly decreased it. The plus factors were : (i) the natural growth of the old population, (ii) the large expansion of the tea industry which imported 7.69 lakhs of tea garden labourers into the State, (iii) the immigration of East Bengal colonists and the Nepalis. Against this must be set off the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918-19 which was estimated to have carried off over 2 lakhs of persons. Of the large increase of population of 8.3 lakhs, nearly half was due to immigration. Most of the increase, both in immigration and in the natural population, occurred in the Assam Valley. The influenza epidemic appeared to have done more damage in the hills districts except Garo Hills and Manipur than in the rest of the State. It does not appear that influenza affected the Assam Valley and Cachar with the same severity as was evident in other parts of the State or in the rest of India.

### (C) 1921-1931 :

The tea industry lost a very large number of tea labourers as the result of the economic and political troubles at the beginning of the decade and 422,000 of labourers imported into the State during 1921-31—many of whom were short-term labourers who returned to their homes on the expiry of their agreements—were not enough to fill the gaps caused by that desertion and discharge. There was no violent epidemic and public health was decidedly good; in fact the decade from the point of view of public health was 'the best in the history of Assam'. Hence, the natural population of the State grew at twice the rate it did in 1911-21. The population growth in spite of being the highest recorded in Assam till then, was mainly due to natural increase, not immigration which formed only 10 per cent. of the total. The immigration of eastern colonists and Nepalis continued. The immigrants consolidated their position in



Goalpara and completed the conquest of Nowgong. The Barpeta sub-division of Kamrup district had fallen to their attack while Darrang was being invaded. Only Sibsagar had escaped completely, while a few thousand Mymensinghais had already created an outpost in North Lakhimpur.

#### (D) 1931-1941 :

This decade saw another tremendous growth in Assam's population, constituting a mean decennial growth rate of 17.9 per cent which is a record unsurpassed up-to-date. It is impossible to correlate this rapid growth in population in any way to the economic conditions of the decade. The cultivator was in distress except during the last two years and his purchasing power was greatly reduced. The whole State was seriously affected by the world-wide great economic depression of 1928-32 and especially by the precipitous fall in the prices of agricultural produce. Whatever little trade and commerce including the tea industry Assam had suffered a severe depression. It was only after the outbreak of the war in 1939 there was a steep rise in foodgrains prices; hoarding and profiteering became rampant and prices showed an upward trend. Hence, this record decennial increase is mainly due to the three demographic factors, *viz.*

- (i) The natural growth of the old population.
- (ii) Immigration of East Bengal colonists, tea garden labourers and the Nepalese, and
- (iii) The absence of any epidemic due to the growing mastery of Kala-Azar, and other epidemic, as well as non-epidemic, diseases.

### 23. Conditions of the decade (1941-1951) :

#### (A) General :

The first half of the decade was dominated by the second World War which came particularly close to Assam, especially after the fall of Burma. Thousands of Indians traversed the mountain passes on foot in 1942 to regain their home country while a number of them were evacuated by air also. The whole of Assam became one vast military camp, as the enemy battalions came right up to Kohima. Manipur, Imphal, Silchar, Bishnupur became household words overnight in the whole of India and the outside world. Assam witnessed a tremendous amount of military activities and

operations including building roads, aerodromes, camps, hospitals, etc. The "Quit India" Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi was particularly strong in some parts of Assam, e.g. Nowgong, disturbing the lines of military communications and resulting in the usual repression by way of firings, arrests, detention and collective fines. The Bengal Famine of 1943, in which more than 1.5 million people died of sheer starvation and hunger gave a great filip to Muslim immigration into Assam as destitutes from Bengal poured into the neighbouring districts of Goalpara, Sylhet and Cachar. The latter kept their body and soul together by working as agricultural or urban labourers.

The latter part of the decade witnessed the end of the war and the advent of the Congress Ministry in power after years of political wilderness due to non-cooperation with the war efforts. Soon came the Cabinet Mission with its plan of a three-tier constitution in which Bengal and Assam were to be joined together. Under the fine leadership of the late Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi, (Assam is greatly poorer by the loss of this good son of hers) Assam stoutly opposed this plan which ultimately failed and was followed by the Mountbatten Plan of June, 1947. The Muslim League demand for the inclusion of the whole of Assam into Pakistan was partially satisfied under this new plan by holding a referendum in the district of Sylhet to decide the fate of this overwhelmingly Muslim majority district. The people of Sylhet, sharply divided on communal basis threw in their lot with Pakistan by a majority of over 50,000 votes. Then came the partition of the country of which the partition of Assam was a part and the emergence of India into a Dominion of the British Commonwealth of Nations. This independence was achieved at a price, *viz.*, the partition and the senseless communal blood bath which preceded and followed it. At the beginning of 1950 there were some minor communal disturbances, mainly confined to Cachar and Goalpara but also casting their shadows on the neighbouring districts of Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong. Communist activities advocating open defiance of the legally constituted authorities and recourse to violence raised their heads in Assam during the latter part of the decade. The movement was speedily brought under complete control by undertaking police operations on an adequate scale especially in the districts of Sibsagar, Kamrup and Goalpara.

The price that India had to pay for Independence, namely partition, had its counterpart

into the immense stream of refugees that started coming into Assam soon after the independence of the country. By the middle of 1949 already 114,000 refugees were censused in Assam and a majority of them, nearly 60,000, were censused in the district of Cachar alone. The communal disturbances in East Pakistan in February 1950, led to the arrival of far greater numbers, and were followed in Assam by an exodus of nearly one lakh of Muslims. The situation was soon brought under control and by far the large majority of these Muslims were back to their native places within a few months.

#### (B) Weather and rainfall :

On account of the discontinuance of the annual weather and crops report, I am not in a position to discuss in detail the condition of weather and crops during the decade. However, whatever information, I have been able to gather is summarised below :—

The climatic conditions in 1940 were on the whole satisfactory. There was deficiency of rain in January and April and excess during March.

In 1941 the climatic condition was again satisfactory.

In 1942 temperature, humidity and rainfall were almost normal. Weather was particularly dry all over the State during the first month of the year. Total amount of rainfall during the year was 105.2 inches.

The year 1943 had a total rainfall of 103.6 inches with normal temperature, humidity and rainfall. On account of uniform distribution of rainfall there was no flood.

The climatic conditions in 1944 showed variations. The average rainfall was somewhat lower and the temperature higher than their respective normals.

Climatic conditions did not show very marked variations in 1945. In most of the districts the rainfall was higher than in the previous year. Local flooding occurred in all plains districts except in Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur causing considerable damage to crops in various parts of the State. The price of common rice was much higher than the prewar level.

During the years 1946-48, climatic conditions did not show any marked variation. The flood which occurred in July 1946 caused heavy damage in Cachar district and the one which

occurred in October submerged about 2,000 square miles in Nowgong and Kamrup Districts affecting about 700 villagers. In 1947, there were three localised floods in Lakhimpur district causing some damage to property. In 1948, floods occurred in the plains districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Sibsagar and as a result, crops were damaged and people were put to great distress.

During 1949, however, the climatic conditions were not abnormal and the rainfall was also abundant.

The climatic conditions in 1950 were moderate and the rainfall was little less than the previous year.

#### (C) Agriculture :

The main notable feature is the annual occurrences of heavy floods in Assam during the latter half of the decade, which was largely due to the indiscriminate destruction of forests to meet the heavy demands of the war and rapidly growing population. Both due to the floods and the great rise in Assam's population, the State became deficit in the latter half of the decade and for the first time in its history started importing foodgrains from outside, especially to meet the demands of the tea industry and organise the industry and the railways. Blackmarketing, hoarding and profiteering were also responsible for this state of affairs. The expansion of agriculture and the cropping system and its correlation with the growth of population will be discussed in a later chapter. But it may be noted here that from the very beginning of the decade shortage of essential commodities, including food became preoccupation. To the man in the street the supply question dominated even the war news. Intensive propaganda was carried on and various concessions given to encourage increased production of food crops and for bringing under cultivation cultivable waste and fallow lands and the cultivators took advantage of the subsidies, especially for minor irrigation works and bunds.

#### (D) Co-operative Movement :

It was unfortunate that the Cooperative Movement made little headway in the State and was not in a position to contribute its mite towards helping the agriculturist. Even at the peak in 1930-31 the agricultural credit societies in Assam were lagging behind those in several other provinces in India. For instance, the number of societies per 100,000 inhabitants of the population in Assam in that year works

out to 15 while this average for the whole of British India was 29.5. Barring N. W. F. P. and United Province, which had only about 10 and 10.9 societies per 100,000 of the population respectively, Assam had the lowest average as compared with other provinces and States. With regard to the number of members, Assam had 6.4 members for every 1,000 inhabitants, while the British India average was 10.1. The working capital per society and per member was Rs. 2,272 and Rs. 56 in Assam, as compared to Rs. 4,117 and Rs. 121, respectively, for the whole of India. The working capital per head of population worked out to Re. 0-5-9 in Assam, as compared to Rs. 1-3-5 for the whole of British India.

With the onset of the depression the second phase of the movement commenced. The deterioration in the economic condition of the agriculturists, who were the core of cooperative credit societies, directly affected the societies in an adverse manner. At first, this was reflected in unsatisfactory recoveries, mounting overdues and considerable constriction in the issue of fresh advances, all reacting on one another. For instance, in 1930-31, the recoveries of agricultural credit societies amounted to Rs. 8.08 lakhs as against Rs. 9.07 lakhs in the previous year. The percentage of overdue loans of all types of societies had gone up from 17.5 in 1925-26 and 27.3 in 1927-28 to 48 at the close of 1930-31. Similarly, the fresh advances of credit societies of all classes recorded a fall from Rs. 13.75 lakhs in 1929-30

to Rs. 11.5 lakhs in 1930-31. In the years that followed latent defects which were hampering the spontaneous growth of the movement, and other shortcomings which accounted for the weakness of its foundation and structure, were also coming to the surface. During the decade the movement was passing through great difficulties and was on the brink of an imminent collapse. The main reasons for the deterioration as stated by the Registrar were as follows :—

- (1) Acute economic depression prevailing which compelled the debtors to defer payment.
- (2) Accumulation of heavy overdues which made the debtors despondent and definitely hostile to make any payment amicably.
- (3) Reluctance to pay off the creditors as fresh finance was not forthcoming due to credit contraction in the rural areas.
- (4) Absence of finance for seasonal loans.
- (5) Absence of any summary power of recovery.
- (6) Want of timely action for recovery.
- (7) Non-observance of the cardinal principles of Cooperation.
- (8) Above all, the disloyalty of the members and loss of faith of the general public.

The continuous deterioration in the movement which the above causes have all contributed to is well illustrated by Table 1.12 below relating to the position of the agricultural credit societies in Assam.

TABLE 1.12  
*Agricultural Credit Societies in Assam (1928-45)*  
(000's omitted)

Year	No. of agricultural credit societies	Member- ship	Amount advanced during the year to individuals	Amount recovered during the year from individuals	Total loans outstanding at the end of the year from individuals	Overdues	Percentage of overdues to outstanding loans
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
1928-29	1	53	794	470	2,152	920	42.7
1929-30	1	53	662	362	2,419	1,235	51.0
1930-31	1	55	369	267	2,494	1,585	63.6
1931-32	1	55	254	218	2,506	1,833	73.1
1932-33	1	52	85	137	2,422	2,100	86.7
1933-34	1	50	55	110	2,341	2,178	93.0
1934-35	1	49	47	111	2,250	2,159	96.0
1935-36	1	46	60	155	2,100	1,984	94.5
1936-37	1	43	67	167	1,886	1,787	94.7
1937-38	1	42	92	162	1,781	1,673	93.9
1938-39	1	41	89	157	1,643	1,527	92.9
1939-40	1	39	83	194	1,429	1,327	92.9
1940-41	1	36	67	143	1,226	1,125	91.7
1941-42	1	33	51	115	1,059	994	93.8
1942-43	1	30	33	144	870	832	95.6
1943-44	1	28	27	234	637	604	94.7
1944-45	1	26	51	136	534	489	91.5
1945-46	1	26	90	80	555	481	86.6

The following facts emerge from this Table :—

(1) The number of societies remained practically stationary since the economic depression until 1940-41 and the next four years recorded a continuous fall due to liquidations. As the Registrar has put it 'in pursuance of the policy of consolidation, hopeless societies are being gradually weeded out'.

(2) The fall in membership is striking. In the course of 18 years the membership has dwindled from 53 thousand in 1928-29 to 26 thousand in 1945-46 or in other words, the number of persons that the societies served was reduced to less than half the original number.

(3) Column 3 evidences the great contraction of rural credit that has taken place. While loans to the tune of Rs. 794 thousand were advanced during 1928-29 (not itself a very big sum) they amounted to only Rs. 27 thousand during 1943-44, the lowest level reached so far. Expressed as a percentage, the loans issued in

1943-44 have declined by 96.6 as compared to 1928-29.

(4) From the last column, it will be seen that percentage of overdues mounted steeply during the early years of the depression reaching the staggering height of over 90 in 1933-34 at which level it has stood for nearly a decade and a half. The position was thus serious and called for immediate remedial measures.

**Non-Credit Societies :** On the side of the non-credit societies the movement during the second phase may be mentioned the growth of consumers' stores, milk societies, central wholesale stores and industrial societies. Of them, consumers' stores alone stood foremost. The paucity of food-stuffs and other essential commodities and war-time controls over them gave an impetus to the people to form their **Consumers'** own stores as a means of fighting the **Stores** blackmarket. The following table 1.13 shows their sudden and spectacular growth during the war years :—

TABLE 1.13

*Non-Credit Societies in Assam (1941-45)*

Year	No. of Societies	No. of Members	Share Capital	Working Capital	Sale	Profit
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1941-42	19	1,609	31,001	133,122	406,110	18,455
1942-43	43	2,634	46,686	158,219	516,298	25,018
1943-44	609	57,357	759,589	943,850	3,522,812	174,767
1944-45	1,229	135,380	2,651,002	10,317,647	13,012,842	299,793
1945-46	1,403	130,850	3,026,148	10,624,766	36,727,733	425,722

These stores were thus a war-time creation and were mainly dealing in controlled commodities like kerosene oil, wheat products, etc. They were in fact distributing agencies for the controlled commodities, got up move for that purpose than to serve as general stores furnishing all consumers' needs eliminating the profiteering individual retailer. Therefore, when the controls were lifted their purpose also seemed to have ended and many of them went into voluntary liquidation while most of the others declined gradually.

It was expected that the rise in prices and consequent betterment in the economic position of the agriculturists would enable speedy recovery of the frozen assets of the Cooperative Societies. But these anticipations were only partially realised. Though there was a rise in prices imme-

diately after the war started, which is stated to have resulted in "extremely satisfactory collections in some of the central banks", it was not so apparent nor did it last long. A downward tendency was soon evident. Further, the general rise in the cost of living at that period appears to have offset to an extent the limited benefit that had been derived from the price rise. The result of all this was that the movement did not benefit very much in Assam from the effects of the war which greatly helped its revival in most other states. The position of the movement at the end of the war is best summed up in the words of the Registrar as one of "dwindling assets, increasing liabilities, waning public confidence, a falling off in the number of members, decreasing influx of fresh finance, a shrinking of business and an all-round stagnation".

By the end of the war period, Cooperation as a people's movement started and run mostly by people themselves was dead in Assam and to the extent that it existed previously, it would appear that more people were ruined than helped by it. Hence the bad odour about it in the state and a desire to promote the new Government experiment. In the new scheme the movement is being remodelled altogether on a new basis ignoring the past. It is not only largely controlled by the Government but is also in a great part run by them. The chief characteristics of the new movement are the insistence on uniform bye-laws of a comprehensive type, concentration on multi-purpose trading cooperatives and the provision of patronage dividend. The new co-operatives are to work not as isolated institutions but in close alliance with the new village panchayat system which is about to be started and of which they are indeed expected to form the economic framework. In fact, the new movement will form a division of the Rural Development Plan. (Para. 10 ante should be seen).

The existing cooperative institutions will all be eliminated either by liquidation, voluntary or otherwise, or by amalgamating them with the new set-up. The new institutions, which are gradually springing up will take over the entire functions of the movement and none of the old cooperative societies will be allowed to exist in their present shape.

#### (E) Prices, price control and rationing :

The outbreak of the world war led to a great rise in prices all over the country which became greater as the war went on. Prices in Assam rose even higher than elsewhere in India. The end of the war did not see any easing up of the economic situation. Actually the prices rose still further and surpassed even the highest peaks reached during the war. The decade was throughout one of high inflationary prices and was therefore, on the whole a prosperous one for the agriculturists. But the condition of the latter was by no means affluent, as the prices of other non-agricultural articles soared to even higher levels, while they had to submit to seizure and regular control of their stocks of rice and paddy.\*

Supply conditions in the State gave cause for concern. The villager was happy for the high prices that his produce fetched, but for others it was a problem to get the food supplies. The problem of obtaining clothes, fuel and kerosene and other necessities engrossed every one's attention.

At the beginning of the decade various control orders were instrumental in reducing prices but they also had the effect of driving supplies underground and the problem of obtaining supplies at controlled prices became more acute. Shortage of rice in the market was partly due to hoarding, but a good deal of the grain undoubtedly was now consumed by the producer himself owing to increased prosperity. The cultivator met his needs by disposing of only a small quantity of grain in the market (which brought him sufficient money) and consuming or hoarding the rest. This, besides other factors, made the deficit of food grains real, especially at the end of the war. The rationing was introduced in most of the towns regarding rice, kerosene oil, cloth, sugar, mustard oil, and dhal. Sugar, cloth and kerosene oil rationing was later on extended to rural areas also. They had their inevitable repercussions in the form of increased blackmarketing, profiteering and hoarding depending upon the efficiency of the district authorities to enforce the control orders.

#### (F) Industries :

The war gave an impetus to increased industrial production especially to oil, coal and tea. It also led to increased demands of labour, and high wages, a part of which was given in the form of foodgrains concessions so far as tea garden labour was concerned. Trade and commerce also got an artificial fillip.

#### (G) Economic prosperity and growth of population :

The population growth is determined by the natural increase on the one hand and the balance of migration on the other. Economic prosperity prevailing in the decade had hardly any direct effect on either. The births during the decade show a decline but, as will be examined in a later section, this decline cannot be ascribed to any change of fertility or adoption of birth-control methods arising out of improved standards of living. Likewise the decline in the death rate was due to control over epidemics and improvement in medical facilities

\* The whole discussion is based on "Co-operation in Assam—A New Experiment",—published recently by the Reserve Bank of India.

rather than to better nutrition. Migration will be treated in the next section. There was undoubtedly a large immigration of Muslims, tea garden labourers, and the Nepalese, apart from a vast influx of refugees from East Pakistan. On the whole, therefore, economic factors played an insignificant part in the growth of the population of the State during the decade.

#### (H) Public Health in 1940-50 :

In 1940, there was no serious epidemic or cholera in the State, but the incidence of Kala-Azar was found to be higher than in the previous years as a result of intensive survey, viz., 21,141 against 17,756.

The general state of health in 1941 was not satisfactory. The death rate per 1,000 of population was 0.82, as compared with 0.32 in the preceding year. The death rate from small-pox was 0.04 per million as compared with 0.16 in the preceding year and 0.13 the decennial average. The incidence of Kala-Azar decreased during the year, viz., 16,470 cases against 21,141 during the previous year.

1942 was a better year than its predecessor. Deaths under all heads of mortality with the exception of Cholera, Dysentery and Diarrhoea were less than in 1941. The number of deaths from Cholera reported during the year was 12,806, yielding a death rate of 1.33 against 7,729 and 0.82 respectively in the previous year and the decennial average was 0.67. A total of 9,538 deaths was reported from Dysentery and Diarrhoea during 1942 as compared with 9,489 in the previous year. The number of Kala-Azar cases treated during the year increased, viz., 20,033 against 16,470 in 1941. The incidence of Cholera was abnormally high and it visited in an epidemic form almost all the districts. The reason for its appearance was mainly aftermath to (1) movement of troops, (2) passing of evacuees from Burma through the India-Burma road and Silchar-Bishunpur route and (3) the labourers who are generally recruited from other provinces in India and who might have brought infection from their native villages. In order to bring the epidemic under control all the available Sub-Assistant Surgeons and the Local Board Doctors were engaged.

In 1943, the scarcity of foodstuffs on account of high prices of rice was mainly responsible for the deterioration of the health of the people in general. Health conditions of the people in gen-

eral were far from satisfactory during the year under review. Cholera was responsible for 15,454 deaths in 1943, a death rate of 1.58 as compared with 12,806 and 1.33 respectively in 1942 and the decennial average 0.74. During the same year 1,692 deaths from small-pox were reported as compared with 294 in 1942 giving death rate of 1.17 and 0.03 respectively and the decennial average 0.12. The number of Kala-Azar cases treated during the year 1943 was 19,208 as against 20,033 in 1942.

In 1944 Kala-Azar which showed signs of recrudescence since 1937 and reached the peak in 1940 appeared to be on the decline. The incidence of Cholera was low, the number of deaths from it being 4,107 against 15,454 of the previous year. The epidemic which broke out in 1943 continued till the earlier part of 1944, during which the incidence of the disease was comparatively higher. Small-pox was prevalent in epidemic form throughout the State, the number of deaths being as high as 11,728 against 1,692 in the previous year.

In 1945 the incidence of Kala-Azar showed a definite upward trend. The fight against the disease had been waged unceasingly but during the war years, both survey and treatment centres had to be curtailed due to lack of doctors. The incidence of Cholera was comparatively low during this year, probably as a result of mass immunity affected by the continuous anti-cholera inoculation carried out amongst the people of the infected areas since the last severe epidemic of 1941-43.

During the triennium 1946-48 there was no large scale outbreak of Cholera; but there was a slight decrease of Kala-Azar except in the Garo Hills, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Goalpara districts where the disease showed signs of recrudescence. A total of 410 cases of Leprosy were treated in dispensaries and clinics under the Public Health Department in 1948, compared to 402 in 1947 and 856 in 1946.

The general state of public health in 1949 was fairly satisfactory in spite of adverse factors directly or indirectly affecting the health of the people. Although high prices of commodities and scarcity of essential foodstuffs continued throughout the year, the number of deaths under all heads of mortality was slightly



lower than in 1948. Since 1947, there has been a welcome trend of gradual decrease in the incidence of Kala-Azar which is endemic in the State. B. C. G. Vaccination was started during the year under review at many important centres in the State. The Kala-Azar Treatment Act, 1949 was introduced during the year for the prevention of treatment of Kala-Azar by unauthorised persons.

In 1950, the general state of public health in Assam on the whole was satisfactory inspite of heavy influx of refugees from East Pakistan, and the number of deaths under all heads of mortality was slightly lower as compared to 1949. The number of Kala-Azar patients treated was 8,677 during 1950 as compared to 11,957 during the previous year. This is mainly due to the vigorous effort made to combat this deadly disease by the Public Health Department in Assam. The decrease in the number of cases treated was shared by all the districts. Yet Kala-Azar still appears to be widespread in the Garo Hills. The number of deaths from Cholera showed an increase in 1950 (1,869) over 1949 figures of 1,185. Hookworm, which is another disease in the rural areas, is common in the State. Although there is no assessment of the actual number of cases suffering from this disease, it is presumed that about 90 per cent of the people of the State are infected with hookworm. The Public Health authorities did extremely good work in controlling and fighting diseases in the earthquake and flood affected areas. Doctors and other staff were withdrawn from other districts and deputed to the affected areas for relief work, even at the cost of suspending the routine survey work and closing less important dispensaries. Huge quantities of medicines and disinfectants were rushed to the affected areas. A very large portion of the supplies had been received from the West Bengal Government, the Government of India, I. R. C. S., etc., free of cost. Two lakh pounds of skimmed milk powder had been supplied free by the UNICEF and distributed to the affected areas. Before receipt of the above full supplies, certain medical stores were also purchased by the Public Health Department. Cholera Vaccine, B'Phage, T. A. B. Vaccine, etc., were supplied from the Pasteur Institute, Shillong and anti-Malaria drugs and D.D.T. from the P.H. Laboratory and Malaria Section and Smallpox Vaccine from Vaccine Depot, Shillong, respectively.

#### 24. Mean Decennial Growth Rates of Assam and some other States of India compared :

TABLE 1.14

*Mean Decennial Growth Rates of Assam, its Natural Divisions and some States of India*

State/Natural Division	1941-51	1931-41	1921-31
(1) Assam	17.4	17.9	17.6
(2) Assam Plains	18.4	17.2	18.5
(3) Assam Hills	11.7	22.5	15.0
(4) Madhya Pradesh	7.9	9.8	11.9
(5) Orissa	6.2	9.7	11.3
(6) Bihar	9.6	11.5	10.9
(7) Uttar Pradesh	11.2	12.8	6.5
(8) Madras	13.4	11.0	9.4
(9) Bombay	20.8	15.3	12.4
(10) India	12.5	13.3	10.5

Table 1.14 compares the Mean Decennial Growth Rates during the last three decades of Assam and its two Natural Divisions with those of some Part 'A' States of India. In the last decade Bombay is the only Part 'A' State whose growth rate (20.8) exceeds that of Assam (17.4). This solitary exception apart, no part 'A' State of India during the last three decades ever showed a higher Mean Decennial Growth Rate than that of Assam. Assam's growth rate for the last decade is very nearly three times that of Orissa, two and a half times that of Madhya Pradesh and double that of Bihar, whereas it is far higher than either Uttar Pradesh or Madras can boast of. The growth rate of Assam is 5 per cent higher than that of India as a whole. We have already discussed the much higher annual percentage rates of increase of Assam as compared with those of any State of India, excepting Travancore-Cochin. These facts clearly bring out the fact of great growth in Assam's population which is great not merely in absolute numbers, but also relatively to other States of India. Comparing the much lower growth rate of India with that of other countries in the world, Kingsley Davis says, "The total Indian increase during 1871-1941, was 52 per cent. The British Isles during the same period increased 57 per cent and during the 70 years period from 1821-1891 (more comparable to India's recent history) they increased 79 per cent. Similarly, Japan during the 70 years from 1870 to 1940 experienced a growth of approximately 120 per cent and the United States a growth of 230 per cent."\*

\* 'The Population of India and Pakistan' by Kingsley Davis, pp. 26-27 (Princeton University Press, 1951).

"The world population has nearly quadrupled in the last three centuries, and that two thirds of this increase has occurred during the last century alone. In the space of the last fifty years, the world has added more persons than were actually living in 1900 in the whole world excluding Asia and the rate for the twentieth century shows world population to be increasing as never before. 'The daily net addition to the world's population is now nearly 60,000.'"<sup>†</sup>

#### 24A. Percentage Rates of Increase of Assam, and Part 'A' States of India :

Table 1.15 below gives a comparative picture of growth in all part 'A' States of India in a different manner. It gives the percentage rate of variation for the entire period of the present half century, as well as for the last 30 years and the last decade separately.

TABLE 1.15

*Growth of Population in Part 'A' States of India 1901-50*

STATE	Net Variation 1901-50	Net Variation 1921-50	Variation 1941-50
India	51.5	43.8	13.4
Assam	137.8	69.9	19.1
Bihar	41.7	38.0	10.1
Bombay	69.5	61.8	23.2
Madhya Pradesh	57.8	34.5	8.2
Madras	55.5	40.4	14.4
Orissa	42.2	31.2	6.5
Punjab	20.7	30.2	0.5
Uttar Pradesh	30.0	35.5	11.8
West Bengal	56.7	51.3	13.6

The overwhelmingly large percentage rate of increase in Assam in the last half century immediately strikes the eye. Actually Assam's overall rate is double that of Bombay (69.5) which is the second highest and is more than four times that of Uttar Pradesh (30) and nearly seven times that of the Punjab (20) ! Assam enjoys a similar primacy when considering net variation during 1921-50. In the last decade Assam's rate of increase is surpassed only by Bombay's (23.2).

<sup>†</sup> 'Growth of Population in the World' (Dr. S. Swaroop, W.H.O. and Vital Statistics Report, April 1951, page 167),

#### 24B. Percentage Rates of Increase of Assam, and some countries of the World :

TABLE 1.16

*Percentage rate of increase of Assam compared with other countries*

Country	Period	Percentage Growth
Assam	1901-50	137.8
Brazil	1900-50	204.0
Union of South Africa	1904-46	120.6
Canada	1901-41	114.2
Australia	1901-47	100.8
United States of America	1900-50	98.3
Mexico	1900-50	86.4
Denmark	1900-50	74.7
Egypt	1907-47	70.1
India	1901-50	51.5
Italy	1901-36	32.4
United Kingdom	1901-51	31.3
Belgium	1900-47	27.2
Germany	1910-46	12.7
France	1901-46	5.3

It would be interesting to compare the rate of increase of population in Assam with that of some other countries as well.

Table 1.16 gives the figures of rate of growth for some selected countries for the period 1900-50. We find that the percentage rate of increase of Assam, viz., 137.8 is exceeded only by that of Brazil (204 per cent.). Every other country of the world e.g., the United States of America (98), Canada (114), Australia (100), Mexico (86), or the Union of South Africa (120), shows a lower rate during these fifty years. Of course, the countries of Western Europe like Belgium (27.2), Germany (12.7), France (5.3), U. K. (31.3), Denmark (74.7) are left far behind.

#### 24-C. Manipur :

The Mean Decennial Growth Rate of Manipur is 12.0 for the last decade as against 13.9 for 1931-41 and 14.8 in 1921-31. The growth rate, therefore, shows a tendency towards decline. The lower mean decennial growth rate of the present decade is partly attributed to the much greater devastation caused by the continued involvement of Manipur for long years in the World War II, when it was occupied by the Japanese armies for quite some time in their advance from Burma towards India, and the great shortage of medicine and supplies it gave rise to.



**24-D. Tripura :**

The Mean Decennial Growth Rate of Tripura for the past decade is 21.9 which is higher than that of Assam. Yet this very high mean decennial growth rate for the past decade shows a tremendous fall from that of the previous decade, 29.2 during 1931-41. In 1921-31, the mean decennial growth rate for Tripura was 22.7. We have to remember that the refugees contribute towards the total increase of as many as 101,201 persons, and considering this, the normal increase in Tripura's population is only to the tune of 24,818, i.e., approximately, 4 per cent. The main reasons are as follows :—

(1) There were communist activities in Tripura which prevented regular census operations being undertaken in some villages. The population involved as estimated by the Secretary, Home (Census), Department, Tripura will not exceed 3,500 souls.

(2) In the absence of any epidemic or famine the only other explanation is the declining Muslim migration from East Bengal to Tripura, now that many suitable areas have been already occupied; and

(3) the reverse process of emigration of Muslims to Pakistan following communal disturbances in Tripura in February, March, 1950. While most of the Muslim migrants from Assam returned there before the census began, this does not appear to have happened in Tripura.

**25. Growth of population in Natural Divisions of Assam :**

The total growth of population of Assam during the last decade was 1,450,670 to which Assam Plains Division contributed the overwhelming majority of 1,313,710 against 136,960 contributed by Assam Hills Division. Thus 90 per cent. of the total increase is accounted for by Assam plains as against only 10 per cent within the hills. The growth in the population of Assam plains in the first three decades of the century was respectively, 5.7, 7.6 and 9.0 lakhs, giving a total of 22.3 lakhs, where the growth in the last two decades taken together has been 23.4 lakhs (10.3 for 1931-41 and 13.1 for 1941-51). Thus we see a repetition of the same tendency separately in Assam plains as we witnessed in the case of the state as a whole and as we shall just see in the case of Assam hills also, viz., the growth in the last two decades exceeds the combined growth in the first three decades of the

century. In the Assam Hills Division, the growth in the first three decades was 2.9 lakhs (1, 0.7 and 1.2 respectively), whereas in the last two decades it was 3.6 lakhs (2.2 in 1931-41 and 1.4 in 1941-51). Thus the growth in the population of Assam Hills for the last two decades of the present century is very much greater than the combined growth therein for the first three decades of the century. This tendency will be evident even if the Mikir Hills Area population is included herein after due adjustment. **All through Assam and its two Natural Divisions, Hills and Plains and their districts, the growth in the last two decades exceeds the combined growth of the first three decades of the century.**

**26. Mean Decennial Growth in Natural Divisions :**

Table 1.14 already gives the Mean Decennial Growth Rate of the two Natural Divisions over a period of last 30 years. The Growth Rate for Assam Plains was 18.5 in 1921-31 from which it fell to 17.2 in 1931-41 before rising again to 18.4 in the past decade. This fall is only apparent and not real, because while the 1941 population figures for the two natural divisions were adjusted for the territorial changes, the 1931 population figures could not be adjusted because no reliable estimate of the Mikir population involved could be made for the 1931 census.

The Mean Decennial Growth Rate of Assam Hills in 1921-31 was 15.0 whereas it has fallen to 11.7 in 1941-51 during the past decade. Its magnitude in 1931-41 (22.5), which is almost double what we find in 1941-51, is simply due to the disturbance created by the population of the Mikir Hills Areas (96,041) which as we have seen above has created a corresponding disturbance in the mean decennial growth of Assam Plains as well. It is clear that the Mean Decennial Growth Rate of Assam Hills is as a rule lower than that of Assam Plains. This is as we should normally expect. Conditions of life in Assam, primitive as they are in the whole State, are far more so in Assam Hills. Assam Hills are extremely backward in communications as well as medical and public health facilities, where almost the sole occupation of the people is agriculture. During the entire recorded census history, Assam Hills have always increased at a slower rate than the Assam Plains, mainly because immigration both of tea garden labourers and land hungry Muslims of East

Bengal was confined solely to Assam Plains. It is also partly due to the fact that in many tribes in Assam the age of marriage is higher than that prevailing in the sister division, while the hazards and hardships of life are far greater. But for the omission of a net population of 15,000 compared with the preceding census, the growth rate of Assam Hills during the past decade would have been 12.8, *i.e.*, 1.1 per cent. higher than it is now.

Glancing through the Subsidiary Table 1.3 we find that Nowgong growth rate of 31.0 greatly exceeds the rate either for Assam or the Plains; it was 14.3 only in 1931-41! On the other hand, that for Goalpara is strikingly low, 8.8 only, lowest in Assam Plains with a fall of 5 per cent within a single decade. The Kamrup rate shows a very considerable fall of over 9 per cent in the course of a single decade. Under the Hills Division several districts show striking variations within a single decade, whereas the negative growth rates of Abor Hills (48.5) and Tirap Frontier Tract (89.2) stand out very prominently. The explanation of all these individual district peculiarities will be discussed while dealing with the phenomenon of district-wise growth in the following paragraphs.

## 27. Breakdown of Total Growth by Districts :

From Table A-2 we find that Nowgong has made the largest contribution to the overall growth of the State, 237,883, closely followed by Kamrup 226,192 and Cachar 220,725 and Sib-sagar 171,796; Goalpara 93,839 brings up the rear with the least contribution to the overall population growth in the State. The two districts of Nowgong and Kamrup alone are responsible for very nearly one-third of the total increase in Assam. With the solitary exception of Goalpara, which is responsible for only 6.5 per cent of the total growth, the growth in every single plains district greatly exceeds the combined growth of all the districts of Assam Hills Division. Considering the growth in Assam Plains Division alone, the quota of the districts of Nowgong and Kamrup is as much as 35.3 per cent. During the decade 1931-40, the relative positions of plains districts regarding the total increase in their numbers is quite different. Kamrup with its increase of 287,454 moves up to the first place, while Nowgong (86,491) takes a back number and comes last. This extraordinary reversal in Nowgong's fortune is principally due to the fact that during

this decade its Mikir Hills Area has been taken out. If it is included, Nowgong will move up to the third place. Lakhimpur comes second with its total increase of 170,640, and Cachar (91,446) brings up the rear. During 1921-30, Kamrup still retains its pre-eminence by registering the largest increase of 213,175 while Nowgong (164,574 including Mikir Hills areas) resumes its rightful rank of 2, displacing Lakhimpur (137,194) to the third place. Cachar again comes last with its very small increase of 52,134.

Assam Hills Division, which as we have seen above contains only 13.7 per cent. of the total population of the state, is responsible for only 9.5 per cent of the growth in Assam's population. Lushai Hills (43,416) here occupies an outstanding position now, by contributing nearly one-third of the total increase in the Division. It is followed by the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills which usurp the second rank (32,038). The tremendous increase of 100,158 registered by this district in the decade 1931-41 requires elucidation. It is due to the inclusion of the Mikir Hills Areas of Nowgong and Sib-sagar into the new district in 1941 without any corresponding adjustment in the 1931 figures. Actually the United K. & J. Hills District contributes the largest quota to the total growth of Assam Hills in this as well as the preceding decade of 1921-31. Even during the present decade 1941-51 the real contribution of this district to the growth in the Hills Division is 53,892, *i.e.*, nearly 40 per cent., (22,544 taken over to the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills without any adjustment of its 1931 figure).

## 28. Growth of population in districts including their Mean Decennial Growth Rate:

It will be extremely useful to review the phenomena of population growth in individual districts and the factors which are responsible for the growth and those which accelerate or retard the growth or its rate. For the sake of convenience of giving a connected account, the distribution by Thana density as well as Summary Figures for Districts are also briefly discussed here.

## 29. Goalpara :

The first district as we enter Assam from the west is Goalpara where the Brahmaputra Valley widens and after Dhubri opens out into the great delta of Bengal.

The population of Goalpara has increased from 1,014,285 in 1941 to 1,108,124 in 1951, an increase of 93,839 as against 130,997 during 1931-41, by far the smallest increase among the districts of Assam Plains. Ignoring the 44,967 displaced persons it is 48,932 only, the smallest overall increase registered by this district in the last 50 years. From Subsidiary Table 1.2 as well as 1.3, it is clear that the population of Goalpara is increasing at a decreasing rate. The growth rates for these three decades respectively are 14.6 in 1921-31, 13.8 in 1931-41 and 8.8 in 1941-51. During the last decade Goalpara has registered the lowest rate of growth of any plains or autonomous district in Assam. This is in contrast to its position in the two previous decades when its Mean Decennial Growth Rate was higher than that of Sibsagar and Cachar.

Its density has steadily increased from 222 in 1921-31 to 254 in 1931-41, and has gone up to 278 in the 1951 Census. At the present Census, Goalpara sub-division has increased by 10.01%, a slightly higher percentage rate of increase than that registered by Dhubri (8.9). This is fully in line with the tendency of population growth in the two sub-divisions for the last 40 years, during which Goalpara sub-division has consistently registered a higher rate of growth than Dhubri; it was only during 1931-41 that for the first time in 40 years the rate of increase of Goalpara sub-division (13.86) was slightly lower than that of Dhubri (15.24). Goalpara which was almost equal with Dhubri in density in 1921 has by now forged ahead of the headquarters sub-division with its density of 299 persons per square mile as against 271 of Dhubri, a density which Goalpara had in 1941, when Dhubri remained at 248.

Subsidiary Table 1.1 shows that no police station in Goalpara has a density less than 100 or over 750, 43.81% of its area has a density from 200 to 450, supporting almost exactly one-half of its total population and only 10% of its area falls in the density group of 450 and above, containing 22.4% of the population. About one-half of the area supports nearly one-fourth of its total population while the remaining half of the district supports three-fourths of its total population. This word picture of the area and population of the district in 1951 is almost indetical word by word with that revealed by the 1941 figures; hence, there is no necessity to dilate on the topic.

In line with the tendency revealed in all the previous censuses, the density is highest in the south-west of the district adjoining Bengal (Dhubri 708, Mankachar 699 and Golakganj 488). These three thanas occupy only 10% of the area but 22% of the population of the district. The density of Gossaingoan (171), of Kokrajhar (174), Sidli (147) and of Bijni (174) like that of the district as a whole looks extremely low but it must be remembered that these thanas, forming what is known as the Eastern Duars, contain vast areas of reserved forest, which extend along the northern boundary of the district. These thanas, better known as the Eastern Duars, have continued to maintain their reputation for unhealthiness accentuated by grossly inadequate medical facilities and difficulties of water supply. I hope I am not prejudiced as it was while touring in this area that I happened to contract Typhus, while holding charge of this district soon after Independence; Sidli thana is the worst, conditions being not much better in northern Bijni and Kokrajhar. On Gossaingoan side the amenities provided by the Local Board are supplemented by the Forest Department and the Missions. No wonder that they contain only 27.5% of the district population but 45.9% of the area. The highest percentage rate of increase during the decade was shown by Dhubri thana (22.5), followed by Bilasipara (18.8) and South Salmara (17.1), whereas the thanas showing low percentage increases are Bijni (0.6%), Sidli (1.7), Gossaingoan (1.9) and Kokrajhar (2.7) inspite of the fact that the Thanas of Kokrajhar, Sidli and Bijni together received an influx of displaced persons to the extent of 8,416. The percentage increase of North Salmara has dropped from 27.4% in 1931-41 to 7.7% in the last decade in spite of its receiving a huge influx of 12,450 displaced persons.

My predecessor in 1941 felt that unless the next decade saw vast improvements in communications, extension of medical facilities and some progress in irrigation, much increase in population cannot be expected and is not desirable. During the last decade efforts were made to improve agriculture by striking "dongs" and other irrigational channels on the north bank while medical facilities were definitely extended. The decade saw vast improvements in communications, especially the new Assam Rail Link, a marvellous piece of engineering, done in record time to restore Assam's much needed link with the rest of India, severed by the Partition. The last Great War saw the construction of an all-weather road from Siliguri to

Jogighopa via Golakganj and beyond to Gauhati onwards. The places between Bilasipara and Jogighopa which were almost inaccessible during the rains as there were no bridges over numerous rivers, are all within a few hours' journey by car to Dhubri or Gauhati with pucca bridges and pitched road all through, constructed by the Military. The Great Assam Earthquake of August 1950, left the district more or less unharmed. There were no epidemics either cholera, small-pox or Kala-Azar. Floods are an annual occurrence so far as south bank of the Brahmaputra is concerned, but the flood of 1948 was unusually high, and gratuitous relief and agricultural loans amounting to rupees four lakhs had to be issued. A number of riverine villages were eroded and the people shifted to Bijni or on the north bank. This brief history of the district during the decade does not give us any clue to its remarkably low total or percentage increase. There was no widespread epidemic in the district nor was the efficiency of enumeration in Goalpara less than in any other district of Assam as we have seen while discussing the results of Sample Verification.

The reasons for this extremely low increase of Goalpara will, therefore, have to be looked for elsewhere. One of the principal causes is that the large increase in population of this district in the previous decades was mainly due to heavy immigration, mostly from Pakistan (East Bengal), which continued till all the available lands in the riverine areas were occupied. Even in 1931, Mullan reported that the great days of mass immigration by the Mymensinghians were over. There was indeed some immigration from outside during the decade 1931-41. All these have formed settlements along the Manas river. This immigration led to an increase of 48.3% and 27.3% in the population of Bijni and North Salmara respectively in 1931-41. The Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, reports that during the decade 1941-51 immigration was practically nil, thus causing little increase if any on that score. Next, a number of villages in the south bank of the Brahmaputra have been eroded by the river; while some of the inhabitants have shifted to other places within the district, others have left this district for good in search of lands elsewhere. A certain amount of migration of tribals probably economic in origin from Goalpara to Kamrup and Nowgong has also been reported. As usual with the tribals, when they move, they move in a body. After continuous cultivation in an area, when

the soil becomes less fertile, they go out in search of virgin soil for better crops even preferring jungly tracts in out-of-the-way places to open areas with good communications. The Deputy Commissioner is inclined to attribute the low increase at the present census to the probable inaccuracy of the 1941 census, during which he suspects there was a certain amount of inflation of figures due to political or communal reasons. Though there is no definite proof for this suspicion it is not baseless. The most important factor responsible for this unusual phenomenon is the unprecedented communal disturbances that took place on a vast scale during the early part of 1950, when approximately 150,000 Muslims left this district. Though a number of them had returned by the time the Census was taken, a large number still remained outside. Thus the worst affected areas, viz., the thanas of Gossaingoan, Goalkganj, Kokrajhar, Sidli, Bijni and North Salmara show either a very small increase or a great reduction in their usual large increase of the previous censuses. I have prepared a special Subsidiary Table 1.10A which brings out this fact very prominently. It is clear from it that while 'Others', i.e., all communities except Muslims, have shown a reasonable rate of growth during 1941-51, the Muslim community, which as a rule increases at a higher rate than others do, not merely has fallen below them in Urban Tract No. 5, Tract No. 16 and Tract No. 13, but has on the contrary, registered heavy decreases, e.g., 8.4% in Tract No. 11, 34.6% in Tract No. 12 and 26.1% in Tract No. 15, and these were precisely the worst affected areas from which Muslims had migrated to Pakistan in large numbers.

### 30. Kamrup :

The population of Kamrup at the present census has come up to 1,490,392 which is an increase of 226,192 over its 1941 population of 1,264,200. Ever since 1931 Kamrup has dislodged Sibsagar as the most populous district of Assam and has retained this position in 1941 as well as at the present Census. Its increase during 1941-50 is larger than that for any other district except Nowgong, 237,883; is yet far below Kamrup's own increase (287,545) in 1931-41, which was the record unattained by any district of Assam during the entire census history of Assam. Ignoring the contribution of the displaced persons (42,871), the net increase becomes 183,321 only. Kamrup shows a Mean Decennial Growth Rate of 16.4 per cent in 1941-51 and 25.6 in 1931-41.

During the two previous decades, Kamrup was just below Nowgong in its growth rate but in 1941-51 it is surpassed not merely by Nowgong but Cachar, Darrang and Lakhimpur as well.

The density of Kamrup has exactly doubled itself in the last 30 years, from 198 in 1921 to 387 in 1951. The density has increased by 59 during the last decade. Its most thickly populated area is in the centre, around Nalbari, where the density is as high as can be found anywhere else in any purely agricultural country of the world. The upper Barbhag mauza which has an area of 23 sq. miles has a density of 1,318 persons to the square mile and two other mauzas, Bansjani and Khata, have densities of 1,102 and 832, figures quite astonishing for Assam.

At the present census, Gauhati subdivision has increased by 17.4 per cent as against 22.5 per cent in the previous decade, while the percentage increase for Barpeta subdivision in these two decades is 18.8 and 44.1, respectively. It appears that the hey day of population growth of Barpeta revealed by the last three previous decades is over when Barpeta showed a rate of growth very much larger than Gauhati. In the present census, the rate of increase of Gauhati subdivision has almost caught up with that of Barpeta. The density of Gauhati subdivision is 367 at the present census, as against 313 at the previous one, compared with 430 and 362 of Barpeta during the same periods.

The highest percentage rate of increase during the last decade is given by Gauhati thana, which is as high as 61. That this is not due to the growth of the town of Gauhati is clear when we consider the break-up of this increase by rural and urban areas. Gauhati town has increased by 47.4, but rural Gauhati by 69.3. This thana alone accounts for an increase of nearly half a lakh of persons (47,380). Tarabari 35.8, Barpeta 25.1 Boko 26.6 and Barama 18.1 are others which attract attention. Nalbari (4.7) Sarbhog (4.8), Hajo (11.8) and Rangiya (12.1) do so by their lower performance. The rural tracts of Barpeta and Tarabari thanas contain a refugee population as large as 8,850, whereas Sorbhog and Patacharkuchi account for another large slice of 5,432. Rangiya's rate is as low as 12.1 in spite of the fact that it received 3,878 refugees within its fold. As a result of these varying increases, the density of Barpeta thana now stands at the high figure of

629, Kamalpur 574, Patacharkuchi 417 and Gauhati 408, all surpassed by Nalbari with its 866, one of the highest densities of any thana in Assam. Boko, thana has the least density of 166 in the district. Looking at the district as a whole the most thickly populated area is in the centre around Nalbari, whereas the area of the lowest density is in the north-east (Rangiya 295) and south-west. As a rule the portion of the district on the south bank of the Brahmaputra with the exception of Gauhati thana has a lower density than the portion on the north bank.

Subsidiary Table 1.1 shows that no part of the district has a density below 150 per square mile, whereas only 10.67 per cent and of its area with 4.57 per cent of its area and 62.2 per cent of its population have a density ranging from 200 to 450. 18.89 per cent of its area inhabited by 33.80 per cent of its population has a density higher than 450, out of which only 5.18 per cent of the area consisting of Nalbari police station falls in the highest density group of 750 and over. This is an improvement on the position of the district in 1941 when no part of the district had a density of less than 100 or between 150-200 or higher than 600. Kamrup does not show such wide contrasts in the distribution of population within its different areas as shown for example by Goalpara. Like all other districts of Assam Plains the largest percentage both of its area (57.67 per cent) and population (52.55 per cent), falls in the density group 300-450. These percentages are much higher than those of its neighbour Goalpara, 31.52 and 38.70, though lower than those of Darrang, its neighbour on the other side, which has 60.2 per cent of its area and 67.9 per cent of its population in the same density group.

The very large fall in this percentage increase between the last decade and the two previous decades is easily explained. The public health of the district was fairly good during the decade except for an outburst of cholera epidemic which accounted for the death of 1,184 persons in 1942-43 in Barpeta subdivision. There were epidemics on a small scale in 1941-42 and 1948-49 accounting for the death of 472 and 410 persons respectively. The extraordinary increase in the population of the district in the previous decades was due to the immigration of the Mymensinghians, especially in the Barpeta subdivision where they have filled up large areas

of waste lands and swamps near the Brahmaputra river. More than one-third of the record increase registered by the previous decade in this district was due to immigration which was responsible for the extremely high increase of 58.9 per cent in Barpeta thana. Immigration did continue to some extent even in the present decade and would have been responsible for a larger rate of increase but for the reverse stream of emigration of Muslims on account of the widespread communal disturbances in Barpeta and elsewhere during the early part of 1950. The special subsidiary Table 1.10B prepared by me throws some light on the extremely moderate increase registered by Sorbhog, Nalbari, Rangiya as well as Barpeta. But for the refugees, the decrease in the stream of East Bengal immigrants coupled with the reverse stream of emigration of displaced Muslims would have produced a still lower percentage increase for this district.

### 31. Darrang :

The public health in the district was generally good except in the years 1941 and 1943 on account of the outbreak of cholera and Kala-Azar. Kala-Azar is now well under control; Cholera was responsible for as many as 1,983 deaths in 1943. The Great Assam Earthquake of 1950 did little damage in Darrang. Floods are an almost annual occurrence in the low-lying and riverine areas and cause damage to crops

The population of the district now is 913,841 against 736,791 in 1941, an increase of 177,050 in the last decade against 151,974 in the previous. Darrang has the smallest population of any plains district. This overall increase is the largest ever recorded by this district during the last 50 years and is greater than that of Sibsagar and Goalpara in this census.

At the present census the percentage rate of increase of Darrang, 24.03, is higher than that of any other district of Assam except Nowgong (36.6%) and Cachar (24.7%). In other words, Darrang has a Mean Decennial Growth Rate of 21.45% and 23% during the past and the preceding decade.

The density of the district which was 263 in 1941 has now shot up to 326 at the present census, surpassing Lakhimpur and Goalpara. It is nearly double that in 1921 (170). The density of the district is low in the north-west, being only 263, 235 and 262 for Paneri, Udalguri and Majbat thanas, and high in the east (Chutia

355) and south-west (Mangaldai 384 and Kalai-gaon 349). Tezpur Thana has the highest density of 428. This is due partly to Tezpur town within the thana, but even the density of rural Tezpur thana (380) is higher than that of any other thana of the district.

Tezpur is made up of two subdivisions of very dissimilar characters. Tezpur on the east and Mangaldai on the west: Tezpur has been mostly opened up by tea gardens, while in Mangaldai the soil except under the hills is not particularly suitable for tea and the sub-division consists of three tracts, a fairly well-cultivated tract in the south-west being separated by an intervening belt of rather useless jungle from a thinly populated sub-montane area inhabited by people of the Bodo race. During 1941-51 there is practically no difference between the rates of percentage increase of these two subdivisions at the present census, 23.9 of Tezpur and 24.1 of Mangaldai; not so in 1931-41 with Mangaldai 35.3 and Tezpur, 19.5. In density Tezpur subdivision with its 333 persons per square mile is very slightly ahead of 316 of Mangaldai. Every thana has shared the high increase registered by the district, but the highest percentage increase is registered by Kalaigaon 51.7, followed by Udalguri and Dalgaon in quick succession with their rates of 35.4% and 35.3% respectively. No police station in the district has shown a lesser rate of increase than 18.7% of Majbat.

Subsidiary Table 1.1 for 1951 shows an extremely interesting feature. Darrang takes a unique place among all the plains districts of Assam in having its population entirely confined to the middle density group of 200-300 and 300-450. No part of the district has a density below 200 or higher than 450. This shows that the pressure of population in Darrang at present is neither too low nor too heavy and is evenly spread throughout the district. In 1941 also no part of the district had a density higher than 450 or lower than 150 per sq. mile.

**Displaced Persons :** They have contributed as much as 18,853 to the growth. 951 were censused in the towns of Tezpur and Mangaldai, whereas the remaining 17,902 in the rural areas. The largest concentration of refugees is found in Panderi and Udalguri, (6,670) while Kalaigaon-Mangaldai account, for another large slice (5,082). 2,704 displaced persons are found in Dhekiajuli



thana while 2,068 in Tezpur and 839 in Chutia. The lowest number of refugees, 539, has taken shelter in Behali and Gohpur tract.

The large increase of 158,197, not taking into account 18,853 due to refugees, registered by this district is not just due to natural growth. It is due to the immigration of a large number of Muslim cultivators from East Bengal, particularly from Mymensing, who took up waste lands during the War. This immigration was particularly noticeable. Waste lands in the chaparis of the Brahmaputra offered very good scope to these people. Encouraged by a sympathetic Government, batch after batch of land hungry immigrants poured in, grabbing every piece of waste land in the chapari as well as Dalgaon thana. 309,981 bighas in Tezpur subdivision and an almost similar amount in Mangaldai were settled with these immigrants. The Deputy Commissioner reports that there is not much scope for further settlement of land in Tezpur subdivision. More than half a lakh bighas of waste land is still available for settlement in Mangaldai, mostly in the tribal belt. A part of the increase must also be attributed to the immigration of tea garden labourers, as Darrang, next to Lakhimpur district, has the largest number of new recruits flowing into its tea gardens.

### 32. Nowgong :

The public health of the district though not bad suffers greatly in comparison with other districts. In the past, Nowgong suffered more than any other district from Kala-Azar which has now greatly declined due to the application of modern treatment. During the decade the number of deaths from this disease has shown a considerable decline as can be evinced by the figures, 133 in 1941, 128 in 1943, 100 in 1945, 81 in 1949 and 74 only in 1950. During the decade sporadic outbreaks of cholera occurred every year generally along the banks of the Kapili and the Kolong rivers. The total mortality from cholera alone in 1942 and 1943 was as high as 3,361 and 1,214 respectively, but the vigilance of the Public Health Department and mass inoculation prevented it from assuming epidemic proportion. The district also suffered from an epidemic of small-pox in 1943, which was responsible for a total mortality of 580, followed by a more severe outbreak in the next year which carried off as many as 1,709 persons. The second half of the decade was almost wholly

free from this disease. The district also suffered from a number of natural calamities during the decade, for example sudden high floods in the Kapili and the Brahmaputra damaging crops and cattle, which have become almost an annual feature, hail-storms, or damage caused by insects etc. These natural calamities virtually converted this heavily surplus area into a deficit one. Government have taken steps for the prevention of floods by irrigation project, drainage works and sluice gates.

Nowgong has now a population of 886,955, less than that of any other district of Assam Plains Division except Darrang; the latter, however, had a higher population than Nowgong in 1941. This change in Nowgong's rank in the 1951 Census is only apparent being due to the removal of 61,728 persons from the district to be included under the new United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district. Nowgong will retain the same relative position even if we compare the population of the plains districts of Assam minus the displaced persons. The population of Nowgong has increased by 237,883 during the last decade (against a seemingly low increase of 86,491 in 1941). This is the largest increase recorded by any district during the present census and is also higher than that recorded by any other district during any of the preceding censuses with the solitary exception of Kamrup whose increase of 287,454 during 1931-41 is an all-time record so far. Nowgong retains its present proud position in the matter of overall increase during the decade even if we compare the total increase minus the displaced persons shown by various districts of Assam.

This huge total increase has enabled the district to register a percentage increase (36.65 per cent) which is higher than that of any other district in Assam Plains Division and higher than that of any other district of Assam excepting Balipara Frontier Tract of the North-Eastern Frontier Agency. In 1921-31, the district registered the phenomenal increase of 41.35 per cent, the highest rate of increase among all districts of Assam. During 1931-41, Nowgong shows a percentage increase of only 15.37 per cent which is less than that of Kamrup, Darrang and Lakhimpur. This is, however, only apparent, being entirely due to the omission of 61,728 persons inhabiting the Mikir Hills areas which are now excluded from the district. If we include them, the increase in the population of Nowgong during

1931-41 will be to the tune of 148,219 against the recorded variation of 86,491, thus giving a percentage increase of 34.25 which will again be the highest among all the districts of Assam, hills or plains, with the solitary exception of the small Balipara Frontier Tract. Its mean decennial growth rate for the percent decade is 30.97 per cent against 34.27 per cent in 1921-30, only 14.28 per cent in 1931-40.

In density Nowgong with its 409 persons per square mile stands second to Cachar only, which has the highest density of any district in Assam, 415. In this respect, Nowgong has registered a terrific increase of 110 over its density at the last census. At the last census, however, the density of Nowgong was only 299, which was lower than that of not only Cachar 333 but also Goalpara 328 and Sibsagar 301. The densest part of the district is more or less in the centre, lying on the left of the Kalong. The police stations of Nowgong 850, Dhing 795, Rupahihat 777, are among the most thickly populated areas in the whole of the State. Lahorighat 525, and Roha 432 are other thickly populated thanas of the district. Among the sparsely populated thanas of the district are Morigaon with a density of only 239, Koliabor 321 and Jamunamukh 317. Every thana has shared in this huge increase of population of the district during the decade. Ignoring the exceptional case of the truncated Lumding thana which gives the tremendous rate of 382 per cent, Jamunamukh shows the highest increase of 98.1 per cent, followed by 39 per cent of Koliabor, 33.4 per cent of Morigaon, 31 per cent of Lahorighat and 27 per cent of Roha. The Dhing thana has registered the smallest increase but that too is as high as 18 per cent. We must, however, remember that the huge rate of percentage increase registered by Jamunamukh thana is deceptive, being due to the omission of 29,252 persons from its 1941 population due to the creation of the new district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills.

Along with the extraordinary rise in density of the district there have been considerable changes in Nowgong regarding the respective proportions of its area and population under particular density groups. In 1941 no part of the district excepting Lumding had a density less than 150 or over 750 per square mile, nor did any part of its area or population come in the density group 450-600. Its two thanas of

Jamunamukh and Morigaon covering 39 per cent of the area of the district inhabited by 22.23 per cent of its population were still in the density group 150-200. Only Koliabor and Samaguri thanas came in the group 200-300, whereas the thanas of Roha and Lahorighat containing 17.82 per cent of the area and 22.52 per cent of the population were in the group 300-450. The highest density group was still 600-750 only consisting of Nowgong, Rupahihat and Dhing police stations, together containing only 17.77 per cent of the area but as large as 39.92 per cent of the population. Thus in 1941 one half of the district supported less than one-fourth of its population, whereas the remaining nearly three-fourths of its population had to remain content with occupying the other half of the district; to put it differently less than one-fifth of the area supported two-fifths of the population while the remaining four-fifths of the area gave sustenance to the remaining three-fifths of the population. The position in 1951, however, is vastly different. The large proportion of the area and population of the district, 39 per cent and 22.23 per cent respectively, in the group 150-200 has now completely disappeared, Morigaon sweeping itself to the next higher group 200-300, whereas Jamunamukh has gone a step still further by being included in the group 300-450. This group 300-450, shows an enormous expansion of the area of the district and population contained within it, viz., 32 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. In contrast with 1941 when there was no area of the district or population in the group 450-600, at the present census we have as large a proportion of the district as 19.26 per cent of the area and 20.31 per cent of the population in this group. The group 600-750 which contained the high density area and population of the district in the 1941 census now shows blank, as the entire population and area have swept themselves over to the next higher group of 750 and over with a total area and population of 21.13 and 37.69 per cent respectively. We now no longer witness such striking contrasts in 1951 as we have seen above in the case of the previous decade; in 1951 only one-fifth of the area supports one-third of the total population of the district, while the remaining two-thirds have as much as the remaining four-fifths of the area.

**Displaced Persons :** As we have seen above, the huge increase of 237,883 of Nowgong during the last decade is partly due to the presence of 38,599



refugees within the district. Among them 10,563 were censused in the urban tract of Nowgong and Lumding, the rest of the district accounting for 28,036. The rural tract of Jamunamukh and Lumding have 13,291 displaced persons forming nearly 45 per cent of the total number of refugees in the rural areas of the district. Rupahihat-Koliabor show the next largest figure, 5,238 followed by Lahorighat-Dhing, 3,755, Roha-Morigaon 3,448, and Samaguri-Nowgong 2,304.

The displaced persons, however, cannot be the sole explanation for the huge increase of 237,883 registered by the district during the present decade as they form less than one-sixth of the overall increase. The real causes are the natural increase of population and the vast immigration of land hungry Muslims from across the border, especially during the first half of the decade. The Deputy Commissioner reports large scale immigration of the East Bengal Muslims in search of cultivable land during the decade. The area settled with immigrants during the last decade was 645,881 acres as against 184,451 acres during the previous decade 1931-41. There was also a certain amount of immigration from Sylhet and Cachar. People from these two districts settled in considerable numbers in the mauzas of Namati, Hojai, Lanka, Jamunamukh, Garobat and Sahari.

### 33. Sibsagar :

The general public health of the district has been on the whole fair. Sibsagar is among the healthiest districts of Assam. Cholera made its appearance in an epidemic form in 1948 and 1949 within some portions of Golghat Subdivision, but on account of the alertness of the Public Health Department, no great loss of lives occurred. Even before the beginning of the decade, from 1938 Kala-Azar was creating havoc in Golaghat subdivision, reporting in 1940 and 1942 as many as 2,584 and 2,128 cases. It is under complete control from 1944 when mortality was less than 100 from which it has dropped to less than 15 in the last two years of the decade in this Subdivision. Floods are an annual occurrence in the riverine areas, especially in the Majuli islands. The Earthquake of 1943 did considerable damage to the property of the people but its effects were completely dwarfed by the great earthquake of August, 1950, which did a tremendous lot of damage.

Sibsagar has now a population of 1,212,224, second largest in Assam, against 1,040,428, in 1941 and shows an overall increase of 171,796 during the last decade against 107,102 in the previous one, the smallest increase among the districts of this Natural Division excepting Goalpara. For the first two decades of this century Sibsagar enjoyed primacy in population among the plains districts which it has lost to Kamrup since 1931. Subsidiary Table 1.2 gives 11.48 as its percentage increase for the decade 1931-41. This figure is artificially low, on account of the exclusion of Mikir Hills population of 34,313 which if included, will force up the percentage increase for this decade to 15.1% and slightly bring down the percentage increase for the present decade to 16.1%.

The density of Sibsagar is 351 in 1951, an advance of 50 over the last decade. The district which in density was second in Assam in 1931 is surpassed in the present decade by Cachar, Kamrup and Nowgong. The most thickly populated parts in the district are in the centre towards the south, viz., the thanas of Jorhat with a density of 650, Amguri 518 and Nazira 504. The areas of lowest density are Bokakhat thana 161, Majuli 170 and Golaghat 245.

The district consists of three Subdivisions, Jorhat, Sibsagar and Golaghat. Among them the highest percentage rate of increase has been recorded by Golaghat Subdivision, 19, (due to lack of adjustment of Mikir population) against only 2 per cent in the previous decade, followed by Sibsagar Subdivision with its 16 per cent increase in the present decade against 13.6 per cent in the previous one. Jorhat Subdivision has increased by 15.2%. Though the increase registered by the district as a whole has been shared more or less evenly by all its police stations, Sonari thana with its 22.8% has registered the highest rate of increase, closely followed by Golaghat thana, 21.5; excepting the thanas of Dergaon, Teok and Bokakhat all others show a rate round about 15.

We learn from Subsidiary Table 1.1 that no part of the district has a density less than 150 or higher than 750. Majuli and Bokakhat thanas occupying 16.9% of the area inhabited by only 8.36 per cent of the total population of the district fall in the density group of 150-200, whereas the large Golaghat thana constituting more than one-fourth of the total area of the district

new falls in the group, 200 to 300. Jorhat with 8.7% of the area and 16.7% of the total population of the district is the only police station to fall in the high density group of 600-750; one-fifth of the population is comfortably settled within nearly half the area of the district, which leaves for the remaining three-fourths of the population an area little more than the remaining half.

**Displaced Persons:** Sibsagar has received the smallest number of refugees within its fold during the decade, only 7,514, while the still more distant Lakhimpur shelters 13,965. Only 854 refugees were censused in its four towns, Jorhat, Golaghat, Sibsagar and Nazira, the remaining 6,660 in the rural parts of the district. The largest number 2,130 among them, has gone to Sonari thana, followed by Golaghat 1,497, while Jorhat-Majuli tract accounts for a further 1,207. The figures for the remaining rural tracts of the district are as follows:—Teok-Titabar 370, Nazira-Amguri 911, Sibsagar 229 and Dergaon-Bokakhat 334.

There is very little immigration of East Bengal Muslims into this district. Its increase is mostly due to natural increase with a small percentage accounted for by immigration of tea garden labourers.

#### 34. Lakhimpur :

The public health of the district has greatly improved, Cholera and Small pox, etc., have become very uncommon, whereas malaria, the public enemy No. 1 of the Indian villages, is being increasingly mastered. The economic and demographic history of the district is uneventful except for the earthquake of August, 1950, which did more damage in this district than in any other plains district. The floods which followed did greater damage than the earthquake. Suffice it to say here that the earthquake has done enough damage to the topography of this district from which it may take centuries to recover.

The population of this district now stands at 1,078,157, exceeding that of Nowgong and Darrang only. Ignoring the refugees, Lakhimpur will surpass Goalpara and Cachar also. There has been an increase of 186,225 against 170,640 in the previous decade. The rate of increase is 20.9% in 1941-51 against 23.7 in the previous decade. Its Mean Decennial Growth Rates for the last and the last but one decade were 18.9 and 21.2.

Consistently with its position during the last four censuses, Lakhimpur occupies the last place regarding density (265) among the plains districts of Assam, which is even lower than that of Goalpara with the latter's forest reserves and unhealthy Eastern Duars. It has very nearly doubled itself from 144 in 1921 to 265 in 1951, an advance of 46 over that of 1941 and of 88 over that 1931. The density of the district is lowest in the north, particularly in Dhemaji (75), Dhakuakhana (173) and North Lakhimpur (176). The densest part of the district is a central belt consisting of the police station of Moran (425), Tinsukia (459) and Doom Dooma (399). Among the thanas on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, Bihpuria alone has density exceeding 300. On account of the forest reserves and hills, the density of Digboi and Margherita is still low, 207 and 180 respectively though they are the chief centres of the petroleum and coal industry of the State. Density is highest in Tinsukia, situated right into the heart of the subdivision, especially its tea belt. The overall density of the district is as low as 265, the lowest in Assam Plains, because the North Lakhimpur subdivision on the north bank of the Brahmaputra along with the Dhemaji thana of Dibrugarh subdivision, have densities as low as 183 and 75 respectively. Actually Dhemaji thana with its 444 sq. miles occupying 11.01% of the total area of the district is the only police station in the entire Plains Division of Assam to have a density as low as 75. No wonder that the district density of Lakhimpur is the lowest in Assam Plains.

Lakhimpur is made up of two subdivisions, North Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh, of very dissimilar characters. Dibrugarh in the south is more suitable for tea, without which indeed it would be a howling waste. North Lakhimpur is too low-lying and subject to floods, to be an attractive area for the tea planters and it is generally only in the neighbourhood of the hills that land well above flood level is found. North Lakhimpur has few tea gardens and no industrial concern of any importance and is perhaps the most backward plains subdivision in the State. Dibrugarh subdivision, with the exception of the Dhemaji thana on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, is on the contrary a vast tea garden. It contains within itself the only two major industries of Assam besides tea, viz., petroleum and coal mines in Digboi and Mar-

gherita thanas. As may be easily expected, majority of the population of this subdivision are foreigners or of foreign descent. Dibrugarh subdivision is in fact the largest tea district in Assam, whose very life and prosperity depends on the prosperity of the tea industry. Dibrugarh subdivision has increased at the rate of 21.2% which is greater than 19.8% of North Lakhimpur subdivision. This is the reverse of the tendency exhibited by the two subdivisions in the two decades previous to the last one when North Lakhimpur on account of the influx of immigrants showed an increase of 34.3% in 1931-41 and 25% in 1921-31 against only 20.8% and 23.1% of Dibrugarh. As can be expected from what we have seen above, Dibrugarh subdivision has a far greater density (308) than North Lakhimpur (183). The density of Dibrugarh subdivision has increased by 54 over that of the previous decade but that of North Lakhimpur by 30 only in 1941-51.

Every thana has shared in this high percentage rate of increase registered by Lakhimpur. The highest rate is of Digboi thana, 33.7%, Joypur, 28.8%, and Tinsukia, 28.7%, are two other thanas which have registered large increases. The lowest rates are returned by Dhakuakhana thana (4.8) and Doom Dooma Dhemaji on the north bank shows 11.7%. Excepting these three thanas no other portion of this district has shown a lesser rate of increase than 18.3% of Bordubi thana.

Subsidiary Table 1.1 shows that no portion of the district has a density higher than 600 and above. Lakhimpur is the only plains district in Assam which has as large as 11% of its area (446 sq. miles of Dhemaji thana with a density of 75) excepting Goalpara (11.7%). Dhakuakhana thana of North Lakhimpur subdivision, with a density of 113 falls in the group 100-150, 14.1% of its area has a density ranging from 150 to 200. This is the North Lakhimpur thana. Thus as large as 36.8% of the total area of the district has a low density of 200 or below inhabited by only 17.37% of its people. It means that the remaining 82.6% of its population has to squeeze itself in 6.2% of its area, 11.63% of the population (Tinsukia Thana) remaining content with only 6.9% of the area. The largest percentage both of its area (49.93) and of its population (65.55) falls in the density group 300-450. From the point of view of population growth this picture is an advance

over its counterpart of 1941 when there was no area at all with a density higher than 450.

**Displaced Persons:** 13,965 displaced persons were censused in Lakhimpur, contributing an increase of 1.6% over the 1941 population of the district. Only 2,959 displaced persons were counted in the urban tract, the remaining 11,006 being all in the rural areas. The four rural tracts, Dibrugarh-Dhemaji, Tinsukia-Bordubi, Doom Dooma-Digboi-Margherita and Joypur-Moran are responsible for 1,261, 5,369, 1,725 and 1,347 displaced persons respectively.

The large increase of 172,260 shown by Lakhimpur is not only due to natural growth but largely to the pouring in of Muslim immigrants from East Bengal, especially Mymensing, in the North Lakhimpur subdivision during the War. North Lakhimpur with its large areas of cultivable waste in the chapari of the Brahmaputra offers a very good scope to this hardy land-hungry people from across the border. Another principal source of increase is the tea garden immigration which is the heaviest in this most important of all tea districts of the State.

The possibilities of increase in population by East Bengal immigration and tea garden labourers are not yet exhausted. Even if circumstances are normal leading to a cessation of stream of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan, this district is likely to reveal again a large increase in the coming decade.

### 35 Cachar :

Cachar had a non-eventful decade from the public health point of view when in spite of floods of 1946 and 1947 no epidemic occurred there in any form on account of the vigilance and precautions taken by the Public Health Department. The 1946 flood attained a height of only 3 feet less than the 1929 flood which was the highest within living memory. It was, however, not so devastating as its predecessor, as the cultivators could grow their crop immediately after the water subsided. One of the most important events in the history of Cachar during the last decade was its re-constitution after the partition of Sylhet following the results of the Sylhet Referendum held in July 1947. This resulted in the thanas of Badarpur, Ratabari and Patharkandi, along with a portion of the old thana of Karimganj (709 sq. miles with 291,320 persons) tagged on to the old district of Cachar. The district underwent a second re-constitution by the separation of its

hill subdivision of North Cachar Hills to form the new United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district on the 17th November 1951. Figures given here are those of Cachar as it stands to-day. The first re-constitution is likely to have a most far-reaching effect on the future demographic as well as political history of the district because the partition of the country of which it was a consequence has led to the arrival of a large number of refugees, who now constitute almost 8 per cent of its entire population.

The population of the present day stands at 1,115,865, showing an increase of 220,725 over its 1941 population of 895,140. Next to Kamrup and Sibsagar, Cachar has the third largest population of any district, plains or hills, in Assam, displacing Goalpara which enjoyed this position in 1941. Its present population, however, contains such a large influx of refugees that if they are ignored, Cachar will be relegated to the fifth place, *i.e.*, higher than that of Nowgong and Darrang only. During the last decade Cachar has added to its 1941 population a number larger than any other district of Assam except Nowgong and Kamrup. Ignoring the large number of displaced persons, 93,177, this increase still comes to 127,548, which is 40 per cent higher than 91,446, which was the total increase in the previous decade. Cachar thus shows an overall increase of 24.7 per cent. during 1941-51, a rate higher than that registered by none except Nowgong in Assam plains. This is in striking contrast to its position in the previous decade when Cachar registered 11.4 per cent increase and stood at the very bottom of its Natural Division in this respect.

This huge increase in Cachar's population has forced up its density from 333 in 1941 to 415 in 1951. Cachar as now constituted is, therefore, the most densely populated district in Assam and has been consistently so in all the three preceding decades as well. In the last decade alone its density has increased by slightly more than 25 per cent over its 1941 figure. The densest part of the district is a central belt consisting of the police stations of Karimganj with its huge density of 1,010, Badarpur 1,195, Hailkandi 777 and Silchar 744, embedded within a low density belt on all sides. The areas of lowest density are in the south, Katlicherra 158 and Sonai 269, with another belt in the north-east consisting of Udaband 264 and Korkhola 279. Lakhipur in the east 334, and Katigora in the north 320. The small thana of Badarpur is the most densely populated

thana in the whole State, Karimganj with its density of 1,010 being entitled to the second rank. The principal reason for Badarpur having this high density is that it is a very small area of only 47 square miles and its total population of 56,156, includes the population of the large Badarpur railway colony numbering 5,893. The density of Karimganj thana comes down to 884 if we take into consideration only its rural portion while that of Hailakandi and Silchar to 735 and 615, if the urban areas are omitted. The tremendous spurt in the density of the four densest thanas of Cachar from their 1941 figures Badarpur 908, Karimganj 761, Hailkandi 665 and Silchar 564, is largely due to the heavy concentration of refugees in their urban as well as the rural areas, (thanas). No police station in this district has density lower than 250 per square mile except Katlicherra (158) which is due to the presence of a large area of reserve forest in this thana.

Present Cachar consists of three subdivisions, the Sadar or Silchar, Hailakandi and Karimganj. Among the three, Karimganj subdivision has increased at the highest rate of 29.9 per cent in the present decade against 23.9 per cent of Silchar and 17.5 per cent of Hailakandi. This is exactly the reverse of the position in 1931-41 when Silchar registered the highest percentage rate of increase, *viz.*, 13.1 against 10.3 of Hailakandi and only 9.5 of Karimganj. After the exclusion of North Cachar Hills subdivision, the district has become more homogeneous. With the inclusion of the tea districts of the Chargola and Longai Valley within it, Cachar will now rank as one of the most important tea districts of Assam. Silchar subdivision is a surplus area with regard to paddy while Hailakandi may be called the granary of the district. Karimganj subdivision is however, in a different position regarding rice and paddy. The large tea producing area of the old subdivision of Karimganj has come to Cachar, whereas its surplus rice producing areas have gone to East Pakistan. The crops in the low-lying areas of Karimganj thana, of Son Bil in Ratabari and Anair Haor in the Badarpur thana are susceptible to regular floods while those grown in the higher areas are greatly damaged by boars and wild elephants. I have personally seen large areas in Ratabari and Patharkandi thanas laid waste by herds of wild elephants which reduced in one night large smiling fields with green shoots of paddy into a flattened trampled-down plain. The truncated Karimganj thana shows the highest percentage rate of

growth, 32.8, with Silchar 31.8, Badarpur 31.6 and Patharkandi 28.4. No police station shows a rate of growth less than 15. Among the thanas which show comparatively a smaller rate of increase are Borkhole 16.1, Hailakandi 16.8 and Sonai 18.1. This is in striking contrast with the 1941 position when the percentage rates of increase were as low as only 2.2 in Katlicherra thana, 5.3 in Patharkandi and 9.6 in Lakhimpur. Actually no thana in the entire district showed even the minimum rate of growth given by the present census, 16.1, with the sole exception of Silchar which alone among the thanas of the district registered an increase of 19.1 in 1941, followed at a respectable distance by 13.4 of Hailakandi.

Subsidiary Table 1.1 shows "nil" under the density groups, 'under 100', '100-150' and '450-600'. Apart from Nowgong, Cachar is the only plains district which has as large a proportion of its area 14.1 per cent and population 31.1 per cent in the highest density group of 750 and over. The largest proportion both of its area and population is found in the middle density group of 300-450. As 37.8 per cent of the area of the district has only 21.25 per cent of its total population, it can be easily realised that four-fifths of its total population has to remain content with less than two-thirds of its area. To put it differently, while half of its population has to live on one-fourth of the area only, the remaining one-half is able to spread itself over the three-fourths.

**Displaced Persons:** As we have seen above, one of the principal reasons for the huge overall percentage increase registered by Cachar is the tremendous influx of refugees from the neighbouring district of Sylhet soon after partition of India. The refugee population of Cachar at one time exceeded the 2 lakhs mark from which it has come down to its present still high figure of 93,177 on account of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement. It is likely that this present figure is an under-estimate, due to the desire of some refugees to enumerate themselves as indigenous persons. Nearly one fourth of the refugees (22,185) has congregated in the three towns of Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi, and the remaining three-fourths are scattered in the rural areas of the district. Out of 70,322 censused in rural Cachar, Karimganj-Badarpur accounts for the largest number, 19,732, followed by Patharkandi-Ratabari 17,897 and Katigora-Borkhola-Udarband 11,745. Rural Silchar 8,251, Hailakandi-Katlicherra 6,625 and Lakhimpur-Sonai 6,072 complete the picture of the distribution

of the Displaced Population in the different rural tracts of the district. It is principally the presence of this large number of refugees in all rural areas of the district that is responsible for the greatly increased percentage rates of variation of different thanas of Cachar, compared with their low increase in the previous decades. Apart from these Hindu refugees, Cachar also reports an influx of small number of Muslim immigrants from Pakistan. While I was in charge of the district, I used to hear grossly exaggerated reports of their arrival into Cachar in large numbers; one estimate put it as high as one and half lakhs of which I saw no evidence at all. The census figures now reveal beyond the shadow of a doubt that except a small trickle which might have come in due to lack of economic opportunities in the more backward East Pakistan, the normal natural increase of population and the influx of refugees are sufficient to account for the present growth in the district population. If the communal situation in East Pakistan is stabilized, enabling the Hindu Minority there to live in peace carrying out their respective vocations, the next census should reveal only a moderate growth of population.

**Pressure of Population on Soil:** Mullan in 1931 was of the opinion that the moderate growth of only 7.5 per cent. in Silchar and Hailakandi was quite sufficient to make the pressure on the soil more noticeable. If so, the greatly accelerated rates of growth in the two subsequent decades 11.4 in 1931-41, 24.7 in 1941-51, in the entire district, which includes in the present decade the influx of refugees without any land or means of livelihood has now left no doubt about it. Even before the arrival of the displaced persons, I personally found a universal demand from all sections of the people of the district to open up some areas of the reserved forests there. Though some of the demand came from a section of the people who wanted to increase their holdings, there was no doubt that the principal demand was from the indigenous persons who either had no land at all or had small uneconomic holdings. Government appointed a Special Officer to enquire how much of the reserved forests can be thrown open for settlement without detriment to the national forest wealth and produce. His report revealed that such available land is very small in area quite inadequate to satisfy even a fraction of the huge demand.

### 36. United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District :

The population of the district is 363,599

against 332,251 in 1941. It thus gives total increase of 31,348 in the past decade (against 42,325 in the previous one). This constitutes almost one fourth of the total increase in the Hills Natural Division of Assam. This district has the largest population among the hills districts of Assam at all the censuses present or past. With the increase of 43,416 registered by Lushai Hills, this means the next largest increase among the hills districts of Assam. Still it is considerably less than the increase in the previous decade simply on account of the separation of 603 square miles from Jowai subdivision, Blocks I and II, with a population of 22,544 inhabited largely by the Mikirs and now included in the new district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. If these portions were retained in this district the total increase would stand at 53,892, by far the highest in this Natural Division, constituting two-fifths of the increase in the entire Natural Division. On the eve of the first Republic Day, the 26th January, 1950, the numerous Khasi States in the old district, covering an area of 3,788 square miles, were merged with the rest of the district, forming the present new and enlarged autonomous unit of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district. The district has thus increased at a nominal rate of 9.44 per cent in the present decade against 14.6 in the previous (mean decennial growth rates being respectively 9.01 and 13.61). As we have seen, the actual percentage rate of increase will be much higher, amounting to 16.2 per cent if the Jowai Blocks I and II were still retained in the district. This is a very large increase; still it falls below the 1921-31 figures when it gave a record percentage of 10.6. Ignoring the small Balipara Frontier Tract with its unprecedented percentage rate of increase of 49.28 and the newly formed United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district which shows a percentage rate of variation of 24.02 on account of the inclusion of Jowai Blocks I and II, without adjustment of its population in previous census, this district shows a rate of increase which is second only to 28.42 per cent of Lushai Hills. In spite of this large total increase, the density of the district has gone up from 60 in 1941 to 66 only at present, on account of its large area. For a hill area this district has a very high density indeed. Ostensibly Garo Hills has a higher density, which is due to its having several plains mauzas which can easily support a population much denser than a hill area can ever do. Still the density of the district as a whole has increased by exactly 50 per cent in the last 30 years as it was only 44 in 1921.

The district consists of two Subdivisions Shillong and Jowai. Jowai is a typical hill area, while Shillong, containing as it does the State Capital, is in many respects very different. Shillong subdivision has increased at the rate of 20.1 per cent against 18 per cent in the previous decade while Jowai subdivision shows a decrease of 21.2 per cent against an increase of 5.8 in the previous decade. If the excluded Blocks I and II were still retained in Jowai subdivision, it will give a percentage rate of increase of 5.8, very slightly less than its increase in the previous decade. Shillong subdivision also shows the same tendency as rural Shillong has increased by 14 per cent against 14.3 in the previous decade. As might be expected, Shillong subdivision has a much higher density of 73 than 45 of Jowai. We see the same difference in the density figures of the previous decade, 61 of Shillong and 41 of Jowai. This however, is largely due to the presence of the State Capital of Shillong with its population of 58,512 in Shillong subdivision. Taking it out, the density of the rural areas of Shillong subdivision comes to 59 in 1951 against 52 in 1941.

The estimated real increase of 16.2 is indeed very high as the district is fairly thickly populated for a hill area. The lower hills are malarial and are avoided by the Khasis. The higher regions contain only a limited amount of land suitable for cultivation. Generally speaking, the only increase in cultivation that can be brought about is by an extension of the wet rice terrace system and increasing cultivation of garden crops like potatoes and oranges. After the partition of the State, the Khasis near the Sylhet border have lost the facilities for the marketing of their produce, especially their oranges, pan leaves and potatoes in the hats on the Sylhet border and buying rice and poultry in exchange. The action of the Pakistan authorities in often stopping the export of eggs, fish, apart from the usual ban on the export of rice, has caused the people on the border many hardships after August, 1947. The State Government is trying to do its best to provide them with additional facilities, for example, providing air transport for the lifting of Khasi oranges from the border from Shela Air Strip to Gauhati and Calcutta.

The above large percentage increase in the district is due to fairly good public health during the decade and the prosperity brought to the hills during the War years when Shillong had a large military population from which the



local people benefitted in various ways. Shillong, the capital of Assam, has increased from 38,192 in 1941 to 58,512, an increase of 53.2 per cent against 43.9 in the previous decade, a rate more or less similar to that shown by Shillong during the decade 1921-31. On account of the ever expanding administrative machinery and the creation of new departments, both Central and State, the population of Shillong is bound to show a steady rate of high increase in future also.

**Displaced Persons:** Displaced persons have contributed an increase of 5,990 to the total increase of the district, and most of them, 4,698, have settled down in the capital, only 1,292 having gone to other areas in the interior.

The more backward Jowai Subdivision is witnessing a rapid improvement of its communication. There is now an all weather motorable road to Jowai from Shillong, which goes right up to Garampani and connected with Silchar via Mahur and Haflong. Another road is also under construction, which will connect Jowai with Badarpur by a shorter route. These new roads are expected to open up the interior hills and bring more custom and trade to the hill people.

### 37. Naga Hills:

There has not been marked change in the public health of the district; it can be called on the whole to have been fair. The only diseases that break out in an epidemic form are small-pox and hill-diarrhoea. During the decade Naga Hills suffered the worst catastrophe in its history in the shape of the Japanese invasion of India. The Japanese came as far as Kohima town in April 1944. In their attempt to dislodge the Japanese from their hill strongholds into which they had dug themselves, the Allies subjected Kohima and neighbouring villages to heavy aerial bombardment repeatedly. As a result most of the houses at Kohima and elsewhere were destroyed or damaged. The district has not yet fully recovered from the ravages of the Second World War; e.g., the previous residence of the Deputy Commissioner at Kohima is now a cemetery. Many brave allied soldiers are buried here with the following fine and arresting tablet:—

“When you go home  
Tell them of us and say  
For their to-morrow  
We gave our to-day”.

Its present population is 205,950 against 189,641 in 1941 (it has gained 16,309 in the

decade against an increase of 10,797 in the previous decade), which is larger than that of the Lushai Hills District. The percentage rate of variation is 8.6, higher than the 6 per cent of the previous decade. Though this is the lowest rate among the autonomous districts, as found in the case of Naga Hills in all the previous censuses, it is a definite improvement on the previous decade and is almost as good as the rate of increase in 1921-31, which was actually 8.9 per cent only against the nominal rate of 12.62 shown against it. (Paragraph 32, page 27, 1931 Census Report).

The increase has been shared in a very uneven manner by its two subdivisions. Kohima actually shows a decrease of 0.7 per cent against an increase of 4.9 per cent in the previous decade. Mokokchung showing against 7.3 of 1941 an increase of 18.7 per cent which is an abnormally high rate of growth for such a backward hill subdivision, enjoying few, if any, advantages of economic advance by way either of agriculture, trade, communications or medical and public health. A reference to the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills elicited simple explanation that this was due to the transfer of all the Lhota and the most of the Sema villages from Kohima to Mokokchung in January, 1947. As neither the district nor the State authorities brought this change to the notice of the Census authorities in time, it has not been possible to adjust the population of these two subdivisions at previous censuses. The density of the district as a whole has changed very little during the last thirty years, 37 in 1921, 42 in 1931, 45 in 1941 and 49 only in 1951. Of its two subdivisions Mokokchung has the higher density of 71 (60 in 1941), against 35 only of Kohima (36 in 1941). In spite of the ravages of the last War the town of Kohima shows a satisfactory increase of 17.6 per cent.

Of the total increase of 16,309 in the decade, the displaced persons have contributed only 333, 312 in the rural area of the district, and 21 in the urban area. The rest of the total increase is entirely due to natural growth of population. The Deputy Commissioner reports “There are no cases of immigration and emigration to and from this district with the exception of the few displaced persons to Dimapur.”

The density of the district varies primarily as between the country of the Angamis, who practise terrace cultivation, and that of the other tribes who live by jhuming. The Angamis cultivate the same land every year, and in

consequence their villages are much larger and closer together; others can jhum the same and only for two or three years and must then migrate or find other means of subsistence. The 1921 Census Report mentions that even then there was considerable pressure on the soil in the Sema country, where scarcity was becoming more acutely felt every year. The Semas were already the most dense on the ground and their land had been jhumed very severely. The 1931 Report harps on the same theme. Though the Sadr of the Kohima subdivision has the lower density of the two, including as it does the Melomi-Primi area, it is the Angami country in this subdivision that is the most densely populated part of the district. The Angamis have developed a really wonderful system of terraced and irrigated rice cultivation by which they get an annual crop of rice from the same fields. In the rest of the district, where jhum is the main form of cultivation the land has to be left fallow for a number of years and this means that larger areas are required to support the population. The Deputy Commissioner reported in 1931 that "the pressure on the land was very great in the Sema country where the hill sides had been jhumed out. To remedy this state of affairs two remedies have been applied. With the help of an annual grant from the Government irrigated terraces have been made where there is sufficient water. These not only give a crop every year but relieve the pressure on the jhum land. Some villages have already been raised thereby from abject poverty to comparative opulence, and the area of the experiment will be extended. In addition to this colonies have been planted on the depopulated ranges near the plains. Heat and malaria are against them and they do not flourish. The whole of the cultivable land in the hills is fully occupied and I think it would be impossible to plant a single other village anywhere".

Considering the above views too emphatic, I referred the matter to Shri S. J. Duncan, I. A. S., the present Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, for favouring me with his considered views on the subject. According to him the "opinion expressed in 1931 holds good to-day after full 20 years. Pressure on land continues to be great, especially in areas where Jhum cultivation is on a large scale. The Semas are migrating to better pastures where such are available outside the district. Some of them established in the depopulated ranges near the plains about 15 or 20 years ago are still struggling hard against heat, malaria and wild animals. The

battle is not won yet. The soil is losing its fertility and the yield of the crops lowered. Recourse to wet or terrace rice cultivation has not been as wide as it could have been desired. It is difficult to change the age-long practice of any tribe in 10 or 15 years". These views of the present Deputy Commissioner who has been in his district for nearly three years give ample evidence of the state of affairs apprehended ever since 1921 about the ever increasing pressure of population on soil in the Naga Hills.

### 38 Lushai Hills :

In spite of its population increasing from 152,786 in 1941 to 196,202, now, the Lushai Hills district as in all previous censuses continues to remain last among the autonomous districts of Assam. It has gained 43,416 persons in the present decade against 28,382 in the past. This is the largest total increase of any district in Assam Hills region and by far the largest ever recorded by the district in the recorded census history of Assam. In the previous decade it had to give place to the districts of United K. and J. Hills and Garo Hills in this respect. In line with its demographic traditions in all the previous censuses, the district has recorded a percentage rate of increase of 28.42 per cent, which is the highest ever shown by any autonomous hills district of Assam and second highest among the whole State with the sole exception of Nowgong (ignoring the tiny area of Balipara Frontier Tract with its 9,721 population). For a hill area with its limited scope for economic expansion and development, and with its almost complete absence of immigration, this is really an extraordinary and phenomenal rate. The two subdivisions of the district do not share the increase in an even manner; Lungleh shows a much higher rate of increase than Aijal. The former has grown at the rate of 36.6 per cent (against 25.9 per cent in 1941), whereas the latter only at 25.1 per cent (against the 21.7 per cent of 1941).

In spite of this phenomenal increase, the district is still the most sparsely populated one among the autonomous districts, with a density of only 24 persons per square mile. Even this low density is double of what it was thirty years ago, and an advance of 6 over its 1941 figure. Of its two subdivisions, Aijal has the larger density of 28 (22 in 1941) whereas Lungleh shows only 13 (13 in 1941), by far the lowest among the



subdivisions of Assam, excepting the North East Frontier areas.

Public health of the district has been very good on the whole. Medical facilities provided by the Government and partly by the Missions are more adequate than in many other districts. In addition a move was made towards employing Lushai doctors on a subsidised basis in outlying areas even before 1941.

A unique system of village welfare committees under the District Red Cross Committee helps in spreading knowledge in the interior about Public Health matters. Again the Lushais are very careful about avoiding any pollution of their water supply. The decade was free from epidemics, rains ample and the crops good. There is no immigration or emigration worth mentioning; the district shelters only 775 displaced persons (none in Aijal town, the whole lot of them being censused in the rural areas). Some Chakmas too have crossed over from the Chittagong Hill Tracts after the partition. The district is the most thinly populated among the autonomous districts. The last decade has seen some improvement in the communications of the district which is no longer so completely isolated from the rest of the State as in the past. The last war saw the construction of a jeepable track from Loharbond to Aijal which connected it with Cachar. The road has now been considerably improved; and big trucks too now go over it regularly carrying goods, merchandise, mail and passengers. This means more trade, outlet better for the people and greater prosperity. A new and better alignment is under construction connecting Bhagabazar in Silchar with Kolosib. The activities of the Cristain Missionaries have led to a great increase in literacy in which the district leads all other districts in Assam. Whatever may be the defects in the education imparted it is this high standard of literacy which has made progress in all other directions possible. Khasi Hills has still the highest female literacy, but if Shillong is excluded, as in fairness it should be, female literacy for the Lushai Hills is much higher than for Khasi Hills. All these factors, social, medical, educational and economic, coupled with the present thin density of population are responsible for the heavy increases in the district population continuously for the last three decades.

### 39. Garo Hills :

The population of the district is now 242,075

against 223,569 in 1941, giving a total increase of 18,506 only against 32,658 in the previous decade. Among the autonomous districts, in total population, it is surpassed only by the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district but in respect of the total increase it gives place to Lushai Hills as well in the present census. In the previous decade, however, Garo Hills was ahead of Lushai Hills regarding its total increase. It has increased by 8.28 per cent in 1941-51, which is slightly less than half the percentage increase of 17.11 recorded in 1931-41 but larger than 6.57 per cent of 1921-31. The mean decennial growth rates for these three decades stand respectively at 7.95, 15.76 and 6.36 per cent. On account of its low overall increase in population, the density of the district has increased only by 6, from 71 in 1941 to 77 today. This, however, is the highest density in the whole of this Natural Division, more than three times the density of Lushai Hills. This is due to the district having a number of plains mauzas which can easily support a much higher population than any hill area can ever do. The settled areas in the plains mauzas is 213,625 bighas. There are unsettled areas also in these mauzas, the extent of which is not known to the district authorities. Taking only the settled portions which is equivalent to 76,618 acres or 113 square miles, the density of the plains mauzas of Garo Hills stands at the tremendously high figure of 564.58 per square mile, as high a density as can be found in any thickly populated portion of a plains district of Assam. On this basis, the hill mauzas containing 3140.7 square miles of the district have a density of only 5.75 per square mile. The district has no subdivision. Table E, Summary Figures, therefore, gives details of population for its mauzas, both hills and plains. While the district as a whole has increased by only 8.3 per cent against 17.1 in the previous decade, Mauzas I, IV., VIII and X show a percentage rate of increase as high as 24.1(18.5), 24.6(19.4), 24.8(9.8) and 36.1(23.3), respectively, figures in brackets being their percentage rates of increase in the previous decade. On the other hand Mauza V, Nibari Plains, and Mauza IX, Ghoshgaon Plains, show a tremendous decrease of 24.2 and 24.3 per cent respectively, while they registered high percentage increases of 25.4 and 25.8 in the previous decade. Two other mauzas, No. III Hills and No. VII Rangapani Plains, reveal an insignificant increase of 1.8 and 2.2 per cent respectively while they accounted

for a decent increase of 10 per cent and 40.4 per cent in the previous decade. Only two mauzas out of ten, Mauza No. III and Mauza No. VI Fulbari Plains, show a rate of increase 8.9 and 9.8, which is similar to that shown by the district as a whole. The Deputy Commissioner, Garo Hills, when requested to explain these striking contrasts and variations, reports as follows:—“One reason for the rather abnormal increase or decrease in the population of the different mauzas during the decade under report is the high incidence of soil erosion particularly in the hill areas where cultivation is badly affected and also due to partial failure of crops in some areas. Consequently, there was an exodus of the tribals who are given to jhumming, from the places affected by soil erosion to the neighbouring mauza. In mauza III soil erosion is pretty extensive and hence the migration of a considerable number of people to the adjoining mauza No. 4. This accounts for the very small increase of population in mauza III and the abnormal increase in Mauza IV.

“In Mauza V there are no facilities for irrigation and so a good percentage of the population from this area has moved to other places. Also in this particular mauza the death rate in 1950 was comparatively higher than usual due to incidence of cholera and small-pox. This should have increased the numbers of migrants from this mauza.

“The inhabitants of the border areas, especially of mauza No. IX have been badly affected by partition. Due to loss of markets for their produce particularly perishable commodities like pineapples and difficulty in getting rice and paddy, many Garo and Hajong families have migrated to the interior. Also apprehension of trouble in the border area had made them shift their homes to places considered by them to be safer. This migration of population from the border mauzas was mainly due to economic reasons.

“As regards the relatively small increase of population in Mauza No. 7, I am inclined to think that some families living on the border of Goalpara have crossed over to that subdivision due to floods and attracted by better living conditions in places to which they migrated.”

Out of the total increase of 18,506, the displaced persons contributed as high a figure as

5,072, thus making themselves responsible for a net increase of 2.3 per cent. Hence the net percentage increase of the district comes to slightly under 6 per cent which is less than that recorded even in the decade 1921-31. This is a poor performance indeed, compared with the increase of 17.1 per cent during the previous decade. The “splendid isolation” in which Garo Hills was developed all these decades has proved a great deterrent to its economic progress. It was so far hopelessly backward in communications. It contains abundant mineral wealth, coal, lime-stone and petroleum and may still one day be transformed from a very backward to one of the most important districts of Assam. The pivotal need of the district is indeed communications. Already a beginning has been made by connecting Tura with Gauhati and Goalpara by an all weather motorable road. Now bus services regularly run from Lakhimpur in Goalpara district to Tura. The improvement of communications will also lead to better exploitation of its forest and animal wealth.

#### 40. United Mikir and North Cachar Hills :

The population of the district is 165,444 against 133,402 in 1941, giving a total variation of 32,038 for the present decade against the nominal variation of 100,558 in the previous one. This is the smallest population among the autonomous districts of Assam, the actual population of the district as now constituted will be larger than this figure, as the district authorities could not possibly anticipate some of the boundary adjustments made by the Mikir Hills Boundary Commission and notified by Assam Gazette Notification No. TAD/R/31/50/151 of 13th April, 1951. The district itself came into existence only on November 17, 1951 (*vide* notifications No. TAD/R/31/50/190 dated the 27th August, 1951 and TAD/R/31/50/204, dated 3rd November, 1952). Its figures were, therefore, still shown under the parent districts of Cachar, Sibsagar, Nowgong and United K. & J. Hills. The Registrar General, however, considered it advisable to separate the available figures from the figures for the parent districts and to consolidate them under the present district. The total population of this new district is the smallest amongst the autonomous districts of Assam and will probably remain so even if full boundary adjustments are taken into consideration. It has increased at the nominal percentage rate of 24.02 during the past decade but the actual rate will be much smaller

as its population contains 22,544 persons inhabiting Blocks I and II of Jowai Subdivision without any corresponding adjustment of the 1941 figures. A similar explanation applies to its nominally enormous increase of 360.17% for the previous decade. This is due to taking into account the population of 96,041 of the Mikir Hills Tract for the first time in 1941 without adjustment of the 1931 figure. The new district is constituted with the Mikir Hills Excluded Areas of Nowgong and Sibsagar as the nucleus to which the North Cachar Hills subdivision of the Cachar district and Blocks I and II of Jowai subdivision are added. North Cachar Hills subdivision of this new district shows a percentage increase of only 6.2 against only half the rate attained by it in the previous decade. The population of Mikir Hills subdivision stands at 125,777 against 96,041 of 1941, i.e., an increase of 31% which includes 23.5% due simply to the inclusion of Jowai area. Thus the actual percentage increase will be hardly 7.5. The density of the Mikir Hills is 28, an increase of 6 persons per sq. mile over the 1941 figure. If we ignore the N. E. F. A. areas, it has the lowest density figure among the autonomous districts of Assam excepting the Lushai Hills which is by far the most thinly populated district. Being a newly constituted district, I have no authoritative accounts of its public health or economic history excepting that for North Cachar Hills subdivision. However, the *raison de tre* for the creation of the new district is to bring about an improvement in the conditions of the Mikir Hills people who inhabit them, who are among the most backward hill people in the State. The public health is far from satisfactory, the area is extremely inadequately served by medical and educational facilities and the climate is malarious and unhealthy. The creation of the new district is bound to give a fillip to the advancement of the principal hill tribes, e.g., the Mikirs, the Kacharis, etc., inhabiting it.

#### 41 N.E.F.A. Areas :

I may first finish with the small Naga Tribal Area (Tuensang) which was censused for the first time in 1951. As no figures for previous censuses regarding it are available I cannot discuss its total or percentage growth during the last or previous decades.

Only the figures of Balipara Frontier Tract are comparable over all the 3 censuses. They show an increase of 40.4 per cent in 1921-31,

and 36.8 per cent in 1931-41, and an immense increase of 49.3 per cent at the present census. During the last as well as the previous decade, Balipara Frontier Tract carries away the palm in returning the highest percentage rate of increase of all areas of Assam, hills or plains for which separate figures are available. This phenomenal increase is mainly due to—

- (1) removal to this district of tea garden labourers' lines of Balipara Tea Estate from Darrang district;
- (2) settlement of retired Assam personnel in pensioners' village and Sonai Pam village and the settlement of indigenous persons from the adjoining villages in Darrang as also ex-tea garden labourers;
- (3) driven by low economic prospects and poverty in their hills; some Hill Deflas have come down to settle in the plains Deflas settlement at Lokra;
- (4) moreover, nearly 570 squatters were censused in the Gobpur Reserve Forest, who have settled there from the adjoining districts of Darrang, Lakhimpur and Goalpara.

These causes are mainly responsible for this immense increase of Balipara Frontier Tract. The natural growth of the existing population, the presence of a floating population (800) in temporary camps working in Forest Reserves and the reformation of the 5th Assam Rifles Battalion with its increased personnel after 1941 are other causes which account for the rest of the increase.

For the remaining 3 frontier areas, Mishmi Hills, Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract, the reader is cautioned against uncritically comparing the 1951 figures with previous ones without the following reservations. Mishmi Hills, for example, shows an increase of only 1.2 per cent against that of 13.8 and 29.9 per cent in the two preceding decades. On the other hand, Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract reveal an unbelievably large percentage **decrease** of 39.0 and 61.7 per cent at the present census. It should be clearly noted that the extremely small rate of growth in Mishmi Hills or the tremendous decline in Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract is not due to demographic reasons but to the omission of a number of villages from the 1951 census as they fell in Part B Tribal Areas, though these were regularly censused in 1941. In Mishmi Hills, for example, the Political Officer

reports the omission of 94 villages from the present census. They are estimated by the Political Officer to have a population of 10,698. If this is added to the present population in order to make it comparable with that of 1941, Mishmi Hills will show a percentage increase of 34.6 which is entirely satisfactory. In Tirap Frontier

Tract 76 villages with an estimated population of 9,638 and in Abor Hills 68 villages with 11,304 were similarly omitted. If these population figures are added to their existing population, Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract will show a percentage growth of 16.3 and 9.1 respectively.

## SECTION IV

### MIGRATION

**42. Statistics of movement:** Statistics regarding movement are available in main Tables D-IV-Migrants, D-V(i) and D-V(ii) and Subsidiary Tables 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6. To the average reader any connection between birth-place returns and migration may appear quite remote. In the absence of any official agency or organisation for the registration of immigrants as and when they arrive, the birth place figures give a clue whether a person is an immigrant or not, and determine the extent of the movement of people from one part of the country to another.

The statistics of birth-place are taken from answers to question No. 5 regarding birth-place in the Census Questionnaire. The following directions were issued:

“Write 1 for every person born in the district of enumeration; if born in any other district of Assam write the name of the district; if born outside Assam, write the district and the State in India or foreign country, as far as can be ascertained”.

The compilation officers were given detailed instructions, maps, postal guides, etc., to locate the district or State of birth in case only the names of villages or Thanas were found in the slips. In several cases direct correspondence was made with the Census Superintendents of other States, seeking their help in arriving at correct tabulation. The results of this effort both at the enumeration and tabulation stages are clear from Table D-IV which shows 178 persons only out of the enumerated population of 9,043,707 against “Birth-place not stated”! This is extremely gratifying when we realise from what distant corners of India people come to Assam. In Manipur we were able to locate the birth-place in all cases, but in Tripura, there were as many as 126 persons whose birth-places were not stated. As great care was taken during tabulation, instances of wrong identification of birth-place returns are perhaps very

few and will not in any case affect the statistics which may be accepted as substantially correct.

In view of the above instructions to enumerators Table D-IV shows merely States of birth in the case of people born outside Assam are without break-up by districts. As a similar procedure was adopted in other States, it is not possible to estimate the natural population of any area in Assam which is smaller than the entire State. At the 1931 Census birth-place not having been sorted by districts but by States only, it was not possible to know figures of persons born in each district of Assam in 1931 nor feasible to work-out the increase in immigrants or natural population of the districts or their relative proportions except indirectly.

**43. Types of migration:** It is customary in the Indian Census reports to recognize five different types of migration. They are as follows:

(1) **Casual:** Casual migration involving minor movements between neighbouring villages, largely by way of marriage, only affects the birth-place figures for the State or districts when such adjacent villages happen to lie on opposite sides of the State or district boundary. While young married women often go to their parents' houses for confinement or other reasons, instances of husbands going to live in the wives' villages are rare. This custom results in the children being shown as immigrants in the husbands' districts when the villages of the wives' parents lie in other districts though the children are naturally not what is generally conveyed by the word ‘immigrant’.

(2) **Temporary:** Temporary migration is mainly due to the movement in the demand for labour, for example, on new roads, railways or public buildings, etc., and to pilgrimages and fairs. This is not migration at all though it disturbs the birth-place figures. As the Census date is carefully chosen to involve the least number of

fairs and festivals. this type of migration is generally a light one. At the present Census however, it is likely to have some significance on account of the large scale construction of roads e.g. Shillong-Badarpur, Jowai-Badarpur, Silchar-Agartala, Silchar-Aizal, Shillong-Tura, etc.

(3) **Periodic**: Periodic migration is caused by recurring seasonal demands for labour. In this type there is a preponderance of men. Nunia coolies coming into Assam every cold weather for earth-work or Nagas coming down to the plains in the cold weather for jungle-cutting are other examples of this type of migration. In the pre-partitioned Assam, the Bhagalus or agricultural labourers coming from Mymensingh and Tippera in thousands for harvesting were a striking feature of the economic life of Sylhet. This type tends to merge into the next semi-permanent type of migration; some of the Nepali graziers who come with buffalo herds in the cold weather take up and settle down as cultivators.

(4) **Semi-permanent Migration**: Here the inhabitants of one place reside and earn their living in another, but retain their connection with their own homes where they leave their wives and families during the period of migration, and to which they return at intervals during their working lives and ultimately on retirement in their old age. As the womenfolk are left at home, the bulk of the migrants would be usually men. The Marwari traders exemplify this type of migration in Assam in which men outnumber women (out of a total of 17,280 immigrants from Rajasthan, 11,752 are males and only 5,528 females). More familiar instances are persons in public and private service including soldiers from outside Assam, who serve here during their service career, going back to their own States after retirement.

(5) **Permanent**: Permanent migration is that in which the migrant leaves one place to settle in another for good on account of factors like over-crowding, pressure on the soil or superior attractions of other locality. Examples of this in Assam are the large number of tea garden labourers who come to Assam and secure an assured wage and home, in place of conditions often amounting to scarcity or famine in their home districts; and the land hungry Muslim cultivators of East Bengal especially Mymensingh who find themselves crowded out, or their homes washed away in the riparian districts and

migrate to enjoy the freedom of the ryotwari settlement in Assam.

(5) **Daily**: There is an additional form of migration which may be described as "daily" the practice of living outside some large urban area and coming and going there daily for business or some other form of an employment, e.g. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, etc. Its volume as yet in Assam is insignificant.

To sum up, there are only really three distinct types of migration, periodic, semi-permanent and permanent. The so-called casual migration is mostly permanent though the distance travelled is small and partly temporary. The so-called 'temporary' type is not migration at all as commonly understood. It does however affect the birth-place figures and for this reason the birth-place statistics do not give an exact statement of migration. Further the census figures do not differentiate between the different types of migration, but there are various factors which make it possible in some measure to estimate their respective importance. One such factor is the distance of the district of enumeration from the district of birth but here it must be borne in mind that while casual migration is confined to shorter movements from district to district, these same movements cover a considerable volume of migration of the more important types. The proportion of the sexes among migrants often furnishes a helpful clue to the nature and importance of each type of migration. It has already been mentioned that females are ordinarily in excess in casual migration. This would be more marked but for the fact that young married women often turn to their parents' houses for their first confinement. In migrations of the periodic and semi-permanent types, the male sex predominates very largely but when they become permanent there is as a rule little difference between the number of males and females. It may be observed that periodic migration not infrequently tends to become semi-permanent and semi-permanent migration to become permanent. Thus the immigration of Nepalis where men largely predominate was originally semi-permanent but has by now become mainly permanent. Unless instructions are given to enumerators to the effect that in the case of those returning their birth-place outside the district of enumeration, the number of years that elapsed since they came to the district or State of enumeration should also be added, it is not possible to make exact differentiation between 'temporary', 'semi-permanent'

and 'permanent' immigrants, or to estimate precisely the volume of the various types of migration. For this purpose additional information must needs be elicited by a few simple questions in regard to the immigrants' intentions of returning to the place of birth and the reasons for migration.

We must also realise the limitations of the birth-place returns as a test of migration. The Census takes the birth-place as the sole test of the enumerated person's normal residence and assumes that he has migrated to the place of enumeration from his place of birth. It takes no account of those who come and again leave between two censuses (e.g. the peak figure of 5½ lakhs of refugees in Assam against 2½ lakhs recorded at the census), of those who immigrate but die before the census date, and of those who emigrate but are not reported from their new districts or countries. This criterion is not entirely satisfactory and results in a number of anomalies, for example children born to a family of semi-permanent settlers in their new place of working will be counted in the next census as part of the native born population, although they are really not so. We have already seen how bonafide residents of a district feature as immigrants merely because they were born in a different district which was the home district of the mothers where they had gone for confinement. In Assam we have missionaries of many European nationalities, e.g. French, German, Italian, Spanish, or British. They settle in Assam districts for the best part of their lives and children born to them during their stay here will obviously be counted as part of the State's natural population!

#### 44. Migration distinguished in terms of direction :

The distinction outlined in the preceding paragraph is distinction in terms of duration of absence from birth-place. Migration can also be distinguished in terms of direction with reference to any given area. From this point of view, it may be classed under three heads: (1) internal migration or movement between different parts of the State, (2) immigration and (3) emigration. Each of these forms may, if not merely temporary and, therefore, unreal, be either periodic, semi-permanent or permanent. In the following paragraphs each form of migration, internal migration, immigration and emigration, will be dealt with in turn.

#### 45. General character of the population of Assam :

TABLE 1.17

##### *General character of the population of Assam*

Birth Place	Actual No.	Number per thousand
1. Total Population	9,043,707	1,000
2. Districts of Enumeration	7,510,193	831
3. Other districts of the same Natural Division	159,042	18
4. Others parts of the State	30,524	3
5. Adjacent States	42,475	4
6. Other parts of India	404,939	45
7. Pakistan	833,288	92
8. Other Territories	63,068	7

A glance at table 1.17 shows that an overwhelming majority of people of Assam, viz., 7,510,193 out of a total population of 9,043,707 i.e., 83.1 per cent, was born in the districts where they were enumerated. Of the remaining people 159,042 were born in different districts of the same Natural Division, while another 30,524 in other parts of the State. 42,475 persons were born in the adjacent states of India and 404,939 in other parts of the Indian Union. Pakistan accounts for 833,288 enumerated in Assam, leaving only 63,068 for all the other territories put together. Only 2.1 per cent of the people were born in other parts of Assam excepting the districts of enumeration. The percentage of people born outside Assam is as low as 14.8 per cent out of which 4.5 per cent were born in other parts of India and 9.2 per cent in Pakistan. Only a microscopic number of 1,749 persons born outside Asia were enumerated in Assam. Overall migration is thus confined to only 17 per cent out of which 2.1 per cent are migrants within the State. We shall further examine the extent of this internal migration soon while examining the figures district by district. Here it will be interesting to compare the overall figures of Assam with those of two States e.g., Madhya Pradesh and Madras. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, the percentage of people born within the districts of enumeration is 90.8 per cent while another 5.7 per cent are born in other districts of the state.



The percentage of people born in other states of India and enumerated in Madhya Pradesh is as low as 2.9 with only one half per cent born outside India. In Madras the position is still more striking and a preponderating majority of the people, viz., 94.6 per cent were born in the districts of enumeration while another 4.5 per cent were born in other parts of Madras! People enumerated in Madras but born in other parts of India number only 0.8 per cent whereas the number born beyond India and enumerated in Madras is utterly insignificant, approximately 0.1 per cent. Thus, though the migration factor is far more important in Assam than, say, in Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Bihar or Orissa the outstanding characteristic is very clear, namely, the negligible migratory movements of the population of Assam where the vast majority practically live all their life in the districts in which they are born. The fact is also borne out by the figures of emigration of people from Assam. The total number of people born in Assam enumerated in other states of India as reported by Superintendents of Census Operations of other States is only 45,986 which shows that only a microscopic fraction of 1 in 171 Assam-born persons prefer to leave their State to seek their fortunes across its boundaries. These two sets of facts clearly reveal the tremendous attractiveness of Assam not merely for the Assamese but also for those born outside and the lack of attraction to other parts of India for the people of Assam.

#### 45 A. General character of the population of Manipur and Tripura :<sup>6</sup>

The general migration pattern of Manipur is simple in the extreme. Here as many as 570,755 out of a total population of 577,037, i.e., 98.9 were born in Manipur! The number of immigrants was 6,282, a microscopic number, giving a percentage of foreign born in Manipur at 1.1 per cent of its total population against 1.7 per cent in 1931. The ratio of emigrants to the total Manipur born is 1:144, as only 3,988 persons born in Manipur were enumerated elsewhere.

In Tripura, barely 409,939, i.e., 64.1 per cent were born in the State, whereas there were 229,030 immigrants, 35.9 per cent of the total population as against 22.19 per cent in 1931. Only 15,710 persons born in Tripura were enumerated elsewhere. The ratio of immigrants to the total Tripura-born is 1:27, i.e., more than 5 times that of Manipur.

#### 46. Internal Migration—(1) Migration within the district :

The form laid down for Subsidiary Table 1.4 requires the entry of actual figures. The absolute figures in such cases do not, however, afford the best illustration of the importance of respective birth-place components and this table would be better put on the per thousand basis used elsewhere. Such figures are extracted and shown below.

TABLE 1.18  
Number per 1000 of district born and of immigrants :

State, Natural Division and District	District born per 1,000			Total No. of Immigrants (000's omitted)	Immigrants per mille of actual population
	Persons	Males	Females		
1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>ASSAM STATE</b> .. ..	<b>831</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>148</b>
<i>Plains Division</i> .. ..	816	804	830	1,267	148
Cachar .. ..	860	853	868	156	140
Goalpara .. ..	835	817	855	183	165
Kamrup .. ..	835	819	854	245	165
Darrang .. ..	750	746	755	229	250
Nowgong .. ..	743	723	767	228	257
Sibsagar .. ..	907	897	917	113	93
Lakhimpur .. ..	741	736	748	279	259
<i>Hills Division</i> .. ..	919	902	937	77	62
United K. & J. Hills .. ..	888	854	923	21	112
Naga Hills .. ..	973	964	982	6	27
Lushai Hills .. ..	946	948	944	11	54
Garo Hills .. ..	950	948	952	12	50
United Mikir & North Cachar Hills .. ..	947	943	952	30	53
Mishmi Hills .. ..	676	649	711	10	324
Abor Hills .. ..	769	714	848	2	231
Tirap Frontier Tract .. ..	533	491	593	2	467
Balipara Frontier Tract .. ..	414	314	568	5	586
Naga Tribal Area .. ..	1,000	1,000	1,000	..	..
<b>MANIPUR STATE</b> .. ..	<b>989</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TRIPURA STATE</b> .. ..	<b>641</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>359</b>

There emerges at once an enormously preponderating homeborn composition in almost every district of the state, which in no case is less than 74 per cent of the total population, the small N.E.F.A. areas excepted. For the State as a whole, as many as 852 persons out of every thousand were born in Assam itself, by far the large majority of them, viz., 831 in the districts of enumeration.

We can treat internal migration in plains districts in 3 broad groups. First is Sibsagar, the only plain district to return over 90 per cent of district-born population, which stands in a class by itself. This is natural as Sibsagar, in the absence of any refugee influx and the lack of any considerable extent of Muslim immigration from East Bengal has the largest number of home-born persons within its boundaries. The second group consists of Lakhimpur, Nowgong and Darrang each of which has about 25 per cent of its entire population consisting of immigrants. As may be expected, Lakhimpur, the Dibrugarh sub-division of which is "one vast tea garden" with numerous industries like coal, oil and other miscellaneous industries, attracts the largest number of immigrants. Even its poorer North Lakhimpur subdivision on account of its vast waste land is a great attraction to the land-hungry Muslims of East Bengal. No wonder if in such circumstances Lakhimpur with 279,000 immigrants returns the largest percentage (25.9) of immigrants of all plains districts.

**Darrang :** Except industries all these factors are present in the case of Darrang. An additional factor here is the great influx of refugees from East Pakistan.

**Nowgong :** Tea garden immigration into the district of Nowgong is not of great consequence because Nowgong is not a great tea producing district; the main factor in Nowgong rivalling Lakhimpur in its proportion of immigrants population (25.7 per cent) is the availability of land for the land-hungry immigrants and that esprit de corps by which even the poorer classes of earlier immigrants invite their relations and friends from their old villages, giving them shelter and food, calling forth a tribute to their fraternal religious spirit, though not to their sense of economic wellbeing.

In between these two extremes lie the districts of Cachar, Goalpara and Kamrup which form the third group and return an immigrant popu-

lation of about 15 per cent. Cachar, one of the greatest tea districts of Assam, stopped immigration of tea garden labour many years ago. It was only during the war that there was some immigration of tea garden labourers, mainly to replace those working on military projects. Among the principal tea districts of Assam, Cachar's immigrant population is the smallest 14 per cent against 26 per cent of Lakhimpur and 25 of Darrang. Goalpara and Kamrup are not by any means tea producing areas but what attracts the immigrants there is the availability of land.

From a perusal of Table 1.18 we find that the difference between the percentages of sexes is not very great indicating the permanent nature of migration. This is so particularly in the tea districts of Lakhimpur, Cachar and Darrang.

#### **The Hills Division :**

There is very little immigration in the Hills, only 6.2 per cent, the total number of immigrants being only 77,000, against a total of immigrants of 1,267,000 (14.8 per cent) in the plains. The vast numbers in the plains are due to the immigration of the refugees, East Bengal Muslims, tea garden labourers and the Nepalis. Those born within the districts of enumeration in the two Natural Divisions are 816 per thousand in the plains; in the Hills they are as many as 916 per thousand due to the comparative insignificance of immigration. The average for the Hills is higher than the highest figure for any plains district of Assam, (907 for Sibsagar) and would be higher still if the plains areas of N.E. F.A. did not depress this average with their very large percentages of immigrant population. Four out of the five Autonomous Districts have more than 95% of their population born within the districts of enumeration, Naga Hills standing first with the highest figure of 973 per thousand. In the United K. & J. Hills district, the number is just below 900, in spite of Shillong with its greater proportion of migratory population.

These figures clearly prove the lack of attraction to hill districts of the would-be immigrants. Even the land hungry Mymensinghias have left them severely alone though this is due to their being compelled to do so by stringent Inner Line regulations, permit system, etc. If the hardy Mymensinghia could not be attracted to them we may have to look for an entirely new and hardier race of men than found on the



Indian sub continent, who could settle in this region. Primitive system of Jhuming and the extreme and costly difficulties of converting it into terraced irrigated and permanent agriculture, the differences of race, climate, geography, religion and tribe, and the lack of economic opportunities are some of the principal reasons. Caro Hills alone among the Autonomous Districts has some future by way of attracting immigrants once its communications are developed leading to a development of its mineral and industrial resources.

#### The N.E.F.A. :

Its districts show extremes of variations regarding the proportions of home-born population. On the one hand is Naga Tribal Area which has cent per cent of its population born within the district of enumeration. Only 16 villages with 7,025 persons were censused here while any immigration into the area is legally prohibited under the Inner Line Regulations. Thus it is no less a legal and political phenomenon than economic and demographic because the area is so remote and the possibilities of economic progress or industrial advance so few that even if the legal bars were removed there is no doubt that Naga Tribal Area due to sheer distance and lack of economic opportunities will continue to show the highest proportion of home-born persons in Assam. On the other hand stands Balipara Frontier Tract which has only about 40 per cent home-born population, 60 per cent being immigrants. Tirap Frontier Tract 533, Mishmi Hills 676 and Abor Hills 769 are in the intermediate position between the two with a proportion of home-born population very much below that of any of the autonomous districts of Assam.

#### 47. Low Mobility of Population :

The above discussion clearly brings out the general immobility of the population and falls in line with the migration pattern of India as a whole, which is very low in the scale of mobility.

"The degree of Indian immobility can be seen clearly upon comparison with other countries. Such comparison, however, is hard to make, because the number and size of the units are never comparable. Yet there is a rough similarity between the states in the United States and the provinces and states in India. In 1940 no less than 22.5 per cent of the native population of

the United States lived outside the state in which born. Contrast this with the 3.6 per cent living outside the province or state of birth in India in 1931. Indeed, as already mentioned, the percentage living outside the district of birth was only 9.8 in India. So the movement between Indian districts is not half so great as that between the American states, measured in the same terms, despite the fact that the latter are on the average more than 17 times as large as the Indian districts. In Australia in 1934 the persons living outside the province of birth formed 24 per cent of the total population; in Bulgaria in 1934 those living outside the arrondissement of birth were 16.2 per cent; in Yugoslavia those living outside the banovine of birth were 7 per cent. The population of the Indian region is low in the scale of mobility.

"The evidence of stability is even more impressive when one realizes that the birth-place statistics exaggerate rather than minimize the amount of movement."\*

#### 48. Some causes of low mobility of Assam's population :

The pursuit of agriculture which is and has ever been the main occupation of the vast majority of the people of Assam does not foster the spirit of adventure or furnish much scope for its gratification. The caste system with its rigid stratification fosters the suppression of geographical mobility; the universality of marriages and the very early age at which they are contracted coupled with the early begetting of children, close family bonds within the sheltering and fostering care of the joint family system, and the diversity of language and culture which is only a striking instance of the general diversity of customs effectively prevent the growth of an individualistic temperament which can give vent to any spirit of wanderlust as we find among the westerners in hiking, mountaineering, trekking, picnicking, motoring, etc., Last but not the least migration is the result of an idea—an idea of what lies somewhere else. The ordinary peasant's ignorance of what is beyond the confines of his very limited horizon, tends to burden him with superstitious fear of what lies beyond rather than fire him with pictures of golden opportunities.

\* The Population of India and Pakistan by Kingsley Davis, Chapter 14, Internal Migration, p. 107.

Another factor of very great importance in Assam is the fundamental difference between the physical environment, climate, religion, culture and social customs, food and dress in fact, the entire *weltanschauung* or way of life of the people in the hills and the plains. These factors, rather than any "innate love of home" are responsible for the general immobility of the population in Assam.

#### 49. Migration in Manipur :

It is natural for the completely land-locked and far away State of Manipur to return as many as 571,353 persons out of a total of 577,635 as born with its frontiers. The break-up by sex is 280,178 males and 291,175 females. Thus nearly 99 per cent of its total population consists of local people while just one per cent forms the immigrants. The sex break-up gives a slightly higher percentage for females, 99.1 against 98.8 for males. The Manipuris have little incentive or reason to leave their sylvan valleys and dales with their congenial geographical, cultural and religious environment and a sufficiency of land adequate for a handsome crop of rice and paddy, for any foreign parts, whether in India or outside. Only 6,282 were born outside Manipur, out of whom as many as 3,806 were born in Assam, the only State adjacent to Manipur, 398 in other parts of India out of which 203 were born in Rajasthan, 1,394 in Pakistan and 684 in other territories. Against this 3,991 persons born in Manipur were enumerated in India. The overwhelming majority of them, as many as 3,923 were enumerated in the adjacent States, all of them in Assam. 68 were censused in West Bengal. Thus the streams of immigrants and emigrants are roughly equal in Manipur of the order of one tenth per cent of the total population.

#### 50. Migration in Tripura :

Tripura reveals the other extreme—409,813 persons only out of its total population 639,029 were born in Tripura, while such a large number as 229,216 censused in Tripura, were born outside its frontiers. The sex break-up of persons born in Tripura is 215,324 males and 194,489 females. 64 per cent of its total population is thus home-born against 35.9 per cent immigrants. The immense stream of immigration into Tripura is readily discernible from these figures. Among the immigrants 210,161 or over 91 per cent were born in Pakistan alone. 9,908 were born in Assam, the only

State adjacent to Tripura, 8,601 in other parts of India, out of which West Bengal accounts for 2,979, Bihar 2,215 Orissa 1,821, Uttar Pradesh 432, Madhya Bharat 410, Manipur 330, Rajasthan 155, and Punjab 129, and just 420 in other territories. The sex proportion of those born in Pakistan, 108,037 males and 102,124 females, is so equal as to declare its character as permanent migration beyond doubt. Slightly less than half, viz., 101,201 are displaced persons who have emigrated to Tripura after partition whereas the remaining 109,000 constitute the migration stream of both Hindus and Muslims seeking land in this undeveloped State. Subsidiary Table 1.5 shows that the number of emigrants from Tripura is like Manipur not large, consisting as it does of 15,953 persons. As in the case of Manipur, an overwhelming majority, viz., 15,098 persons were born in Assam alone, leaving 855 spread over all other States of India, of whom West Bengal is easily the first with 659 persons.

#### 51. Internal Migration—(2) Migration within the same Natural Division :

Migration within the State is a very small stream accounting for only 2.1 per cent of the population of Assam, consisting of two unequal streams, both of them even smaller than their parent, migration within the same Natural Division and migration from other parts of the State.

##### Migration within the same Natural Division

This accounts for 1.8 per cent of the total population, leaving only 0.3 per cent for the other. Their relative importance, however, is different in the case of each Natural Division. In the Plains Division it is the migration within the same Natural Division which is of much greater dimension (2 per cent) than the other (0.1 per cent, whereas in the case of the Hills Division the roles are almost reversed with only 0.3 per cent of the population of the Division migrating within the same Natural Division against 1.6 per cent of its people coming from the plains. It must, however, be noted that the contrast is heightened artificially on account of the presence of a large proportion of people within the N. E. F. A. districts, who are born in other parts of the State. Migration within the same Natural Division is of considerable importance in the case of Lakhimpur (56,365), and Darrang (34,533), containing as much as 5.2 and 3.8 per cent of

their population. This type of migration is smallest in Cachar because Cachar is a part of the Natural Division in a most artificial manner having little or no contact with other districts of its Natural Division. In the Hills Division migration within the same Natural Division is entirely negligible. In the United K. and J. Hills alone among the Autonomous Districts it forms about one half per cent. of the population. United Mikir and North Cachar Hills shows an almost same percentage but that is due to the fact that the figures for it have not been adjusted for boundary charges. In the N.E.F.A., migration within the same Natural Division is of slight importance in the case of Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills and Mishmi Hills.

## 52. Internal Migration (3)—Migration from other Parts of the State :

This type of migration is of very little importance for the State as a whole as well as the Plains Division. In none of the districts of Assam Plains Division we find a presence of a larger percentage of people born in other parts of the State than the insignificant one of 0.3 per cent returned by Cachar. United K. and J. Hills and Garo Hills are the only two

Autonomous Districts which show more than 1.3 and 1.2 per cent respectively of people born in other parts of the State within their boundaries. The figures for the N. E. F. A. districts are, however, interesting. More than one-fourth of the population of Balipara Frontier Tract, 28.5 per cent to be exact, was born in other parts of the State, while the figures for Tirap Frontier Tract, Mishmi Hills and Abor Hills are respectively 19.6, 11.4 and 7.6, which are far higher than those shown by any Plains or Autonomous district of Assam.

**53. Internal movements between the Natural Divisions :** These are very small. Against 1,267,000 immigrants to the Assam Plains Division, about 11,000 came from Assam Hills which in its turn sent out about 19,000 persons. The movement of the hills people into Assam Plains Division is entirely insignificant as the people born in Hills Division but enumerated in Assam Plains formed only 0.1 per cent. of its total population. Assam Hills, however, reveals a very small current of migration from Assam Plains which at the present moment does not attain a larger dimension than 1.6 per cent of its total population.

## IMMIGRATION—MIGRATION FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE

### 54. Immigration—General :

TABLE 1.19

*Number of immigrants to and emigrants from Assam*

Name of State	Immigrants to Assam	Emigrants from Assam
(1) Bihar	206,346	2,466
(2) Orissa	87,216	544
(3) Uttar Pradesh	33,463	3,733
(4) West Bengal	23,454	19,570
(5) Madhya Bharat	23,323	60
(6) Rajasthan	17,280	679
(7) Tripura	15,098	9,908
(8) Madras	12,719	347
(9) Madhya Pradesh	10,637	1,669
(10) Punjab	5,508	651
(11) Bombay	4,786	986
(12) Manipur	3,923	3,806
(13) Vindhya Pradesh	1,594	6
(14) Hyderabad	1,027	41
<b>Outside India :</b>		
Pakistan	833,288	n.a.
Other areas	63,301	n.a.
Total for the State	1,344,003	45,287

It will be noticed that the largest number of immigrants to Assam is from Bihar 206,346 followed by Orissa 87,216, Uttar Pradesh 33,463, West Bengal 23,454, Madhya Bharat 23,323, Rajasthan 17,280, Tripura 15,098, Madras 12,719, Madhya Pradesh 10,637, Punjab 5,508, and Bombay 4,786. The number of immigrants from Manipur is 3,923, that from Vindhya Pradesh and Hyderabad being 1,594 and 1,027. It may interest some to learn the number of persons coming from PEPSU (255), Delhi (119), Himachal Pradesh (88), Jammu and Kashmir (71), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (3) and Ajmer (1).

### 55. Immigration from adjacent States in India :

These adjacent States are West Bengal, Manipur and Tripura, all of which have very slender links with Assam or with one another. Those born in West Bengal, Tripura and Manipur and censused in Assam number about 23,000, 15,000 and 4,000, respectively. Tripura and West Bengal are adjacent States almost in a Pickwickian sense, as at present apart from newly constructed Assam Railway link and a

motorable road, there is little organic or geographical contiguity, much less physical or cultural contact. In no time in its census history Assam received any large contingent of immigration from the districts of Bengal which at present constitute West Bengal. The overwhelming majority of its immigrants come from districts which all now have gone to East Pakistan. For the State as a whole we find that only 1.1 per cent of the population of these States was enumerated in Assam.

#### 56. Immigration from non-adjacent States :

The vast majority of the immigrants into Assam from India came from States which are not adjacent to it. There is an indeterminate number of periodic visitors, mostly general labourers and earth workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and the traders from various parts. As the Nepalis are included under "Beyond India", and the Hindu refugees and the land-hungry Muslim cultivators under "other territories—Pakistan", the only important current of immigration is the tea garden labour immigration of Assam which is treated at some length in the next para.

The immigrants from the rest of India or beyond are not numerous. The men of Rajasthan are Marwaris who do a large part of the trade in this State, both wholesale and retail, in tea gardens and outside. The immigration of Marwaris is of a semi-permanent nature; that it is not permanent can be readily seen from the sex ratio which shows 5,528 females only against 11,752 males. The Punjabis are principally contractors, skilled mechanics, mistris, motor mistris and carpenters on the Railways and tea gardens, also motor drivers on the Gauhati-Shillong road. Their women number considerably less than even one half of their men (3,945 males and 1,563 females). The number of immigrants from Bombay has remained constant since 1931, by far the large majority of Bombayites has gone to the three principal tea districts of Assam, Lakhimpur, Darrang and Sibsagar, and are all permanent immigrants as can be seen from their sex ratio, 2,264 men and 2,522 women.

#### 57. Tea Garden Labour Immigration :

The number of emigrants from the States of Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, etc., show large decreases at the 1951 census over their figures in 1931 in spite of the fact that the States sending out tea garden

recruits to Assam, show consistently large increases. Apart from this general statement, unfortunately, it is not possible to make an exact comparison between the 1931 and the 1951 figures because the 1931 figures include those for Sylhet whereas the 1951 figures include only a fraction of the tea garden labourers in Sylhet to the extent to which they were found in 3½ thanas of Sylhet retained in India. As Assam depends more and more on 'home grown' labour, tea garden labour immigration has come to be a current of decreasing importance in Assam, being easily surpassed both by the Mymensinghians or the Hindu refugees from Pakistan. Most of the people born in Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madras and enumerated in Assam are either tea garden labourers or ex-tea garden labourers.

With the solitary exception of agriculture, tea gives maximum employment to the people of the State. More than half the number of those employed in all industries and services in Assam, is supported by tea. In the case of self-supporting persons who are employees, tea alone accounts for a full three-fourths of the number.

There is no need here to undertake even a brief historical survey of recruitment arrangements of the tea industry till the passing of the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act, XXII of 1932; those who are interested, may refer to pages 20-23 of the report on "An Enquiry Into Conditions Of Labour in Plantations In India" by Shri D. V. Rege, I.C.S., Chairman, Labour Investigation Committee. Suffice it to say that the Royal Commission on Labour, more generally known as Whitley Commission, found the sirdari system of recruitment under the Assam Labour and Emigration Act, VI of 1901, to be very defective. As a result of their recommendations, this Act was repealed and the present Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act, XXII of 1932, was passed, which now regulates recruitment for Assam tea gardens. The previous Assam Labour Board whose duties had been rather that of a policeman to watch over the activities of the Tea Districts Labour Association, was abolished and a greater measure of freedom in the system of recruiting than had hitherto been enjoyed by the industry, was granted.

The main objects of the Act, are to ensure that, (a) recruits are volunteers, (b) they know the conditions of service and that estates adhere

to the conditions of service set before the recruits, (c) reasonable arrangements are made for forwarding the labourer from his home to Assam, and (d) the labourer is, unless he wishes otherwise, repatriated to his home at the cost of the estate after three year's service.

In normal times there is little or no recruiting to Cachar gardens.

In order to recruit labour, the planters have established an organisation called the Tea Districts Labour Association with its headquarters in Calcutta. The machinery of recruitment and forwarding is provided by this Association which also recruits on behalf of its members for the Dooars and the Terai in Bengal though no legislation for recruiting exists in that Province. 77 per cent of the tea industry in North-East India does its recruitment through this Association.

The machinery of the Association includes 19 depots known as Local Forwarding Agencies, in addition to which there are 3 sub-agencies and 28 rest houses which form connecting links between the Local Forwarding Agencies and the recruiting areas further afield. There are also 14 Forwarding Agencies between the Local Forwarding Agencies and the tea districts, at which the emigrants take meals, and at certain of which a halt is made, in both cases according to a schedule approved by the Controller of Emigrant Labour. It is at the Local Forwarding Agency that the Sirdar receives his recruiting advance in cash, that a record of his activities is kept, and that later on, his prospective recruits for the tea estate are examined, medically from the point of view of health, and by the Local Forwarding Agents from the point of view of suitability for work on a tea garden. At the Local Forwarding Agency, recruits having been passed as suitable labour for tea estates, are vaccinated and inoculated, are given outfits of clothing consisting of two blankets (one in summer), a dhoti/sari and various utensils and are finally put into the train, accompanied by peons to see them safely through to their respective tea estates.

Recruitment is carried out through recruits, who fall generally into three classes :—

(a) **Garden Sirdars** : Specially selected from labourers employed on tea estates who are sent to their home districts to engage labour for their gardens. These men may perhaps send up two or three batches of recruits before returning to their gardens at the end of the recruiting season which is generally about June.

(b) **Resident Sirdars** : They are labourers from tea estates sent down to recruit in exactly the same manner as garden sirdars, but the difference is that these sirdars have no intention of returning to their gardens, and this is known to and accepted by their employers. They are, however, prepared to recruit labour for their gardens and a Sirdar's Diary, or History Sheet, is opened in their names, as in the case of garden sirdars in the Local Forwarding Agency. These resident Sirdars are few in number.

(c) **Local Recruiters** : These are individuals appointed locally in the recruiting district by the Local Forwarding Agent, and no tea garden has a lien on the services of such recruiters. They are employed on a commission basis to recruit labour for the pool which is established in each district in order to provide a labour nucleus for these gardens which have hitherto had no recruiting connection with certain districts in which they wish to start recruiting. Labourers recruited by local recruiters are, unless they express a wish to go to a particular estate, allotted to the pool for distribution in accordance with a ballot drawn under the direction of the Executive Committee of the Association. Pool recruiting, however, is not very extensive.

Garden sirdars and resident sirdars work as their employers' agents, *i.e.*, agents of the tea estate from which they have been sent to recruit, while local recruiters are agents of the Tea Districts Labour Association, the interests of which are at one with those of the employing interests, *viz.*, the tea estates.

Recruiting is an expensive business. The main elements in the cost are the sirdar's commission, the rail expenses of the recruit and the cost of his maintenance till he reaches the garden, the maintenance of the organisation of the Tea Districts Labour Association and the cost of repatriation. The Tea Districts Labour Association's commission for recruiting is about Rs. 12 per adult. Before the war the cost of recruiting for Assam estates worked out, on an average, at about Rs. 65, *plus* an average repatriation cost of Rs. 17 *plus* sirdar's commission which varies from garden to garden. The total cost of recruiting before the war was about Rs. 100 per recruit, which rose during and after the war to Rs. 125.

There are two types of emigrants which come under the Act.

(1) **Assisted Emigrants** :

(2) **Non-assisted Emigrants**, *i.e.*, persons proceeding to Assam with assistance but not being

'assisted emigrants, (*i.e.*, ex-garden labourers returning to Assam within 2 years).

Although every person who is to proceed to Assam with assistance is to be taken to a depot, there is nothing in the Act, to compel that he shall be accommodated or fed; it is only 'assisted emigrants' who are required by law to be so treated, although the others get similar treatment for obvious reasons. Besides these recruits there are recruits who may be called 'non-Act' or Voluntary, *i.e.*, persons who have proceeded to Assam at their own expense. The number of such persons is of course very small, being not more than 4,000, 3,000, 6,000 and 7,000 in the first four years of this decade, out of the total emigrants numbering 21,000 16,000 66,000 and 49,000 in 1940-41, 1941-42, 1942-43 and 1943-44. As regards the means of re-

cruitment, the garden sidar is still by far the most important.

#### 58. Tea Garden Labour Immigration Non-census data:

Table 1.20 below gives, to the nearest thousand, the number of tea garden labourers imported annually into Assam from 1930-31. The number of labourers added locally and the number lost by deaths, discharge, desertion or other causes, and the number lost by repatriation under the Act, are given separately in other columns. The figures are taken from the annual reports on tea garden labour emigration published by the Controller of Emigrant Labour, Assam, and given in Subsidiary Table 8.8, in Part I-B of this Report.

TABLE 1.20

*Tea Garden Labour immigration statistics-Non-census data*  
(000's omitted)

Year	No. of labourers imported	No. of labourers added locally	No. lost by death	No. lost by departure, discharge, etc.	No. repatriated	Loss or gain in the labour force of the preceding year Loss (—) Gain (—)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1930-31	52	77	20	123	..	—14
1931-32	51	70	20	90	..	+11
1932-33	39	75	19	79	..	+16
1933-34	48	73	22	70	..	+29
1934-35	20	71	22	66	1	+2
1935-36	23	71	22	68	2	+2
1936-37	28	67	22	84	26	—37
1937-38	32	68	23	61	15	+1
1938-39	30	67	22	61	14	—
1939-40	24	68	21	65	19	—13
1940-41	18	73	19	88	21	—37
1941-42	14	61	19	59	18	—21
1942-43	56	60	26	73	17	..
1943-44	40	51	28	88	17	—42
1944-45	43	52	23	76	13	—17
1945-46	42	68	21	85	27	—23
1946-47	43	66	19	76	21	—7
1947-48	37	75	17	82	22	—9
1948-49	32	72	16	73	27	—12
1949-50	28	74	16	75	30	—19

Col. 3 giving the number of labourers added locally, includes all, adults as well as children, who were added to the strength of the garden during the year in question and who were not recruited under the Tea Garden Emigrant Labour Act, 1932. How far the figures under this head represent managers "taking in each others washing" is not known. These recruitment figures confirm my earlier diagnosis regarding a decline in tea garden labour immigration in Assam. The figures for the imported tea garden labour were at their very highest in the years 1930-31 and 1931-32 when they stood round about 51 thousand. They were exceeded only once during the last 30 years, in 1942-43 when they rose to 50 thousand. This was, however, due to extraneous circumstances in connection with the second world war which made very heavy demands on the tea garden labourers to work on numerous war projects, *e.g.*, the Ledo road, Aijal road and numerous aerodromes and airships, *e.g.* Kumbirgram and Shamshernagar to mention only two in the Surma valley. The recruitment had already fallen to 20 thousand in 1934-35, which is the lowest on record, excepting the figure of 14 thousand in 1941-42. The latter exceptionally low figure of recruitment was due to war scare and the vulnerability of Assam which followed in earlier panic in 1940-41 and which had resulted in as many as 88 thousand labourers being lost to tea industry by discharge or departure as against an average of 62 thousand in the preceding 3 years. The recruitment during war years remained steady at a considerably high figure of 40 thousand; but it has again shown a tendency to decline, witness 37 thousand in 1947-48, 32 thousand in 1948-49 and only 28 thousand in 1949-50.

As against this, the number added locally remained more or less constant at the figure of 74 thousand. It fell considerably and came down just over 51 thousand in 1943-44 and 1944-45 when tea garden labourers were scarce everywhere coupled with equally great scarcity of non-tea garden labour. These two factors were responsible for considerable difficulties in local recruitment of tea garden labourers. Soon after the war the number added locally again rose to 68 thousand in 1945-46 and reached 75 thousand in 1947-48, which is the peak in recent years. It has slightly declined in the subsequent two years of the decade.

The number lost by death remained more or less steady—round about the figure of 21 thou-

sand. Already a tendency to fall in the figure was noticeable at the beginning of the decade but due to difficulties in procuring medicines, and the incessant demands of war which led to relaxation of standards of safety all round, the number rose to 26 thousand in 1942-43 and to 28 thousand in 1943-44. After these peak years, it steadily declined as shown by the average for the last 3 years, which is hardly over 16 thousand. This clearly reflects the availability of more medicines, and of better medical and public health facilities on tea gardens as a result of many tripartite conferences between labourers, employers and Government. As the standard of maintenance of vital statistics on tea gardens is very high, these figures are a tribute to the better health enjoyed by the present day tea garden labourers and their increased consciousness in using the available facilities; actually they are demanding greater facilities, against the past practice and habit of keeping away from them.

I have shown the numbers repatriated separately in order to bring out the effectiveness of some of the provisions of the Tea Garden Emigrant Labour Act of 1932 (Col. 6). This column under the first four years is blank because repatriation under this Act could begin only three years after the Act had come into force. The stream of those who were officially repatriated under the Act began with a small trickle of 266 in 1933-34 and 1327 in 1934-35, and it suddenly rose to over 26 thousand in 1936-37 to fall again to 15 thousand in the next year. The war exigencies and higher earnings of labourers seem to be responsible for the year 1944-45 reporting the lowest figure of repatriation, *viz.*, 13 thousand. In the last two years of the decade repatriation shows a tendency to increase, being 27 thousand and 13 thousand respectively.

I do not propose to dilate here on various problems facing the tea industry, *e.g.*, the wages of the tea garden labourers and the concessions allowed to them or their conditions of housing, health and welfare or the organisation of employers and employees. Those who are interested can easily look up the report of Shri D. V. Rege, I.C.S., Chairman, Labour Investigation Committee, to which I have already referred. It contains extremely useful and interesting information on all aspects of the tea industry in Assam at the beginning of the Second World War.



**59. Foreign-Born People :**

People born in foreign countries and censused in Assam number 894,607 which is a fairly high number compared with a similar number in other States of India. Table 1.21 below gives its break-up for some important countries :—

TABLE 1.21

*Number of people in Assam, born in foreign countries*

Countries in Asia beyond India	894,607
Pakistan	833,288
Nepal	56,572
Burma	3,296
China	378
Afghanistan	131
Ceylon	34
Bhutan	378
Countries in Europe	1,540
Countries in Africa	15
America	153
Australia	41

A glance at the table shows that from the point of immigration from foreign lands, only 2 countries are significant, viz., Pakistan (833,288) and Nepal (56,572). The immigration from these two countries is dealt with at length later on.

Only 33 people from Australia were censused in Assam against 8 from New Zealand, 9 from Canada and 144 from U.S.A. The majority of the European and American group is engaged in the tea industry; others are officials, missionaries and persons engaged in coal-mining, oil fields and other industries. In the Asiatic group are 131 persons, only 6 out of whom are females, from Afghanistan, the usual cold weather pedlars; 378 from Bhutan are also trading visitors, 378 from China are general carpenters and employees on tea gardens and coal mines. Only 102 are recorded as born in Tibet. There is little direct trade through Sadiya owing to difficulty of the route and intervening tribes of Mishmis, while the Tibetan using the Udaluri-Lhasa route leaves Assam before the census date. The immigrants from Burma number only 3,300

at the present census, 2,000 being in the Assam Hills. In the plains (1,200), Lakhimpur (890) accounts by far the largest majority of the Burmese, most of them temporary migrants earning their living in various trades and industries of this district. As may be expected the largest number of immigrants from Burma are found in Lushai Hills (1,637), as many as 1,429 of them being females. They are Chins or Pois, who have settled across the borders in Lushai Hills.

**60. Muslim Immigrants from East Bengal :**

Out of the total number of 833,288 persons born in Pakistan and censused in Assam, 274,455 are refugees, who are treated separately and at length in Chapter VIII. 558,833 are non-refugee immigrants from Pakistan. As no tea garden labour is imported into Assam from the districts which now form part of Pakistan, this number by and large consists of land hungry elements of East Bengal, seeking refuge into Assam, apart from an insignificant number of those who come for purposes of trade, commerce or miscellaneous sources of employment. A small element of Hindus, especially of the Namashudra class, also forms part of the land hungry immigrants; yet an overwhelming majority of over 90 per cent, if not more, consists of Muslims alone.

**61A. The course of Muslim immigration into Assam :**

I shall now briefly review the course of Muslim emigration from East Bengal based on previous Census Reports.

**1881-1891**

Very many persons in Assam as also elsewhere will now be surprised to read what Sir Edward Gait wrote in his Census Report of 1891 :

“It might have been thought that the amount of cultivable land available, the fertility of the soil, and the low rents prevailing would have induced some portion at least of the overcrowded cultivators of Bengal to find their way to Assam and take up land there. But this does not appear to be the case. The coolies for the tea gardens come to Assam because they are more than usually indigent, and are specially recruited and brought to the province at the expense of the persons for whom they are to



labour. No such inducements exist to bring ryots to Assam to take up land for cultivation and they therefore do not come. A certain number of persons from the neighbouring Bengali districts of Mymensingh, Dacca and Rangpur have crossed the boundary and settled down in Sylhet and Goalpara, but they can scarcely be called immigration. They have only moved a few miles from their original homes, and the accident of boundary alone has brought them within the limits of Assam" (Bold type mine, R.B.V.)

### 1891-1901

A slight falling off in the number of immigrants from Bengal into Goalpara was noted by Allen in his Census Report of 1901. The same authority, however, remarks: "The district is a purely agricultural one and there is nothing to attract immigrants." (Bold type mine, R.B.V.)—as if the vast amount of virgin and readily available land in this district was in itself not good enough to attract any land hungry peasant.

### 1901-1911

Before 1911, however, a change came which proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the two authorities mentioned above were false prophets. The men of Mymensingh began to advance to Assam, driven apparently by pressure on the soil at home. They were joined by the people of other East Bengal districts in less numbers. The Census Report of 1911 is the first to comment on the extraordinary in-course of settlers to the char lands of Goalpara from the Bengali districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur. The population of Goalpara which increased only by 1.4 per cent in 1881-91 and 2 per cent in 1891-1901 now shot up by 30 per cent in 1901-11. The thanas most affected were in the west of the district: the percentage rate of increase was 70.1 in South Salmara, 61.8 in Lakhipur and 88.6 in Bilashipara! The extent of immigration can readily be estimated from the fact that the growth in natural population was only 15.6%. The number of immigrants in Goalpara rose from 49,059 to 118,233, an increase of 240 per cent, forming 19.7% of the actual population of Goalpara. Thus began the peaceful invasion of Assam by the advancing hordes of Mymensinghia army, which has continued right up to the present day, ushering in probably the most important single

event in the history of this State during the last 50 years—an event aptly described by Mullan as "likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than did the Burmese invaders of 1820 the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilization." At this time, however, few cultivators went beyond Goalpara, those censused in other States of Brahmaputra valley being mostly clerks, traders and professional men numbering only a few thousands.

### 1911-1921

As we now know, the Bengal emigrants censused for the first time on the char lands of Goalpara in 1911 were merely the advance guards—or rather the scouts of a huge army following closely at their heels. By 1921, the first army corps had passed into Assam and had practically conquered the district of Goalpara. The course of events is thus described in 1921 Census Report—

"In the last decade (1911-21), movement has extended far up the Assam Valley and the colonies now form an appreciable element of the population in all the four lower and central districts. The sex and age figures given in the 1921 Provincial Table IV show that the colonists are settling by families and not singly. It is reported, however, that the men generally come first to secure the land and building houses, and the families follow. About 85% are Muslims and 15% Hindus.

"The Eastern Bengal settlers have increased more than four fold in the decade to their present total of 258,000 in the Brahmaputra Valley. There are also some 6,000 people of Mymensingh and Rangpur in the Garo Hills. Sibsagar and Lakhimpur are scarcely touched as yet. In Goalpara nearly 20% of the population is made up of the settlers. The next favourite district is Nowgong where they form about 14% of the whole population. In Kamrup waste lands are being taken up rapidly, especially in Barpeta subdivision. In Darrang, exploration and settlement by the colonists is in an earlier stage; they have not yet penetrated far from the Brahmaputra banks. Almost every train and steamer brings parties of the settlers and it seems likely that their march will extend further up the Valley and away from the river before long."

## 1921-1931

TABLE 1.22

*Persons born in Bengal and enumerated in each District of the Assam Valley in 1911, 1921 and 1931*

(000's omitted)

Year	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgong	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur
1911	77 (34)	4 (1)	7 (1)	4 (1)	14 (Nil.)	14 (Nil.)
1921	151 (78)	44 (30)	20 (12)	58 (52)	14 ( „ )	14 ( „ )
1931	170 (80)	134 (91)	41 (30)	120 (108)	12 ( „ )	19 (2)

Table 1.22 gives the figures, in thousands, of persons born in Bengal and enumerated in each district of the Assam Valley in 1911, 1921 and 1931; those for Mymensingh district being given in brackets as that district is the one which is chiefly responsible for the flood of immigrant settlers. It must in the first place be remembered that the children of the settlers born to them after their arrival in Assam have been recorded as Assam born and hence do not appear in the above figures. The table shows that the total number of people born in Bengal, not merely the number of settlers; still it gives us a very good idea of what has been taking place during the last 10 years. These figures enabled Mullan to arrive at the following conclusion:—

“The second army corps which followed in the years 1921-31 has consolidated their position in that district and has also completed the conquest of Nowgong. The Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup has also fallen to their attack and Darrang is being invaded. Sibsagar has so far escaped completely but the few thousand Mymensinghians in North Lakhimpur are an outpost which may, during the next decade, prove to be a valuable basis of major operations.

“Wheresoever the carcass, there will the vultures be gathered together. Where there is waste land thither flock the Mymensinghians. In fact the way in which they have seized upon the vacant areas in the Assam Valley seems almost uncanny. Without fuss, without tumult, without undue trouble to the district revenue staffs, a population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to the Assam Valley during the last twenty-five years. It looks like a marvel of administrative organization on the part of Government but it is nothing of the sort: the only thing I can compare

it to is the mass movement of a large body of ants”.\*

Lloyd in 1921 estimated that including children born after their arrival in Assam the total number of settlers was at least 3 lakhs in that year. Mullan placed their number in 1931 to be over half a million. The number of new immigrants from Mymensingh alone was 140,000 and the old settlers were undoubtedly increasing and multiplying. Out of the total of 338,000 persons born in Mymensingh and censused in Assam in 1931, over 152,000 were women, confirming the fact already pointed out in 1921 Census Report that the colonists were settling by families and not singly.

## 1931-1951

From data available to him, Mullan tried to peer into the future and attempted to forecast the future course of this invasion as follows†:—

“What of the future? As far as can be foreseen, the invasion is by no means complete: there are still large areas of waste land in Assam—particularly in the North Lakhimpur subdivision—and Kamrup, in spite of the large number of immigrants which it has absorbed during the last 10 years, as capable of holding many more. The Mangaldai sub-division is also capable of further development. Now that most of the waste lands of Goalpara and Nowgong have been taken up the trend of immigration should, therefore, be more and more towards Kamrup, Mangaldai and North Lakhimpur. The latter subdivision should prove a veritable “El Dorado” if news of its empty spaces awaiting the hoe and plough of the colonist reaches the ears of the main body of trekkers.”

\* 1931 Census Report, p. 51.

† Ibid, p. 52.

This prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter during the last 20 years.

There was no tabulation at all of birth place returns in the 1941 Census. Again in 1951 Census birth place was sorted only for Assam districts separately, while those who were born outside the State were merely lumped together under their respective States. Hence I am not in a position to give figures of persons born in

Mymensingh and found in the various districts of Assam. The following table 1.23 gives the numbers in thousands of persons born in Pakistan and enumerated in the various districts of Assam, Manipur and Tripura with their break-up by sex. As the numbers of refugees and their sex break-up are separately available they too are given therein, enabling us to arrive at numbers of persons born in Pakistan who are not refugees.

TABLE 1.23

*Persons born in Pakistan—both refugees and non-refugees with their sex break-up and enumerated in the districts of Assam, Manipur and Tripura in 1951*

(000's omitted)

State, Natural Division and District			Pakistan			Non-Refugees			Refugees		
			Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
1			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>ASSAM STATE</b>	..	..	833	465	368	599	315	244	274	150	124
Assam Plains	..	..	796	445	351	536	304	232	260	142	118
Cachar	..	..	130	70	60	37	20	17	93	50	43
Goalpara	..	..	136	78	58	91	53	38	45	25	20
Kamrup	..	..	186	106	80	143	82	61	43	24	19
Darang	..	..	84	44	40	65	34	31	19	10	9
Nowgong	..	..	173	98	75	135	77	58	38	21	17
Sibsagar	..	..	26	15	11	19	11	8	7	4	3
Lakhimpur	..	..	61	34	27	47	26	21	14	8	6
Assam Hills	..	..	37	20	17	23	12	11	14	8	6
United K. & J. Hills	..	..	16	9	7	10	6	4	6	3	3
Naga Hills	..	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
Lushai Hills	..	..	7	3	4	6	2	4	1	1	..
Garohills	..	..	8	4	4	3	1	2	5	3	2
United M. & N. C. Hills	..	..	4	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Mishmi Hills	..	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
<b>MANIPUR STATE</b>	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
<b>TRIPURA STATE</b>	..	..	210	108	102	109	54	55	101	54	49

Persons born in Pakistan and enumerated in Assam reached the enormous total of 833 thousand persons, out of whom excepting a bare 37 thousand enumerated in the Assam Hills Division (20 thousand males and 17 thousand females), the vast majority of 796 thousand (445 thousand males and 351 thousand females) were enumerated in the Assam Plains alone. A close approximation of their sex ratio which gives only a slight preponderance of men over the opposite sex is a clear indication of the permanent nature of this immigration. Of course, this huge number includes the large number of refugees born in Pakistan, who have recently migrated to Assam during the partition. The data regard-

ing refugees are treated at length in Chapter VIII. Suffice it to note here that their number in Assam is 274 thousand (150 thousand males and 124 thousand females), out of whom all excepting 14 thousand (8 thousand males and 6 thousand females) are in the Assam Plains. Subtracting the number of refugees from the total number of Pakistan born non-refugee persons, we get the huge total of 559 thousand persons in Assam (315 thousand males and 244 thousand females) out of whom only 23 thousand (12 thousand males and 11 thousand females) are in the Assam Hills Division, all the rest, viz., 536 thousand (304 thousand males and 232 thousand females) in the Assam Plains.

Table 1.23 also gives the break-up of Pakistan born population censused in Assam by districts. From what has been discussed above, it is very natural to find Sibsagar returning the smallest number of Pakistan born people, viz., 26 thousand while Lakhimpur returns 61 thousand. Contrast them with the huge numbers found in Kamrup (186 thousand) and Nowgong (173 thousand). Goalpara and Cachar with 136 thousand and 130 thousand persons respectively also return substantial numbers of Pakistan born people. In the Hills division, nearly half the Pakistan born population was censused in the United K. & J. Hills district (16 thousand) with Garo Hills (8 thousand) and Lushai Hills (7 thousand) following. The five districts of the N.E.F.A. together account for less than 1,500 persons, 800 in Mishmi Hills alone. These figures are a striking testimony to the vast numbers of East Bengal settlers in Assam. This stream has been continuous in the last two decades, gathering momentum in the first half of the present decade during the regime of the Muslim League Ministry in Assam upto January, 1946. It, however, continued thereafter and even the setting up of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan did not prove deterrent to these settlers who continued to pour in even after partition. I have personally seen hundreds of persons coming by trains during the few months I held the charge of Goalpara district. I had the same experience as Deputy Commissioner, Cachar during 1948-49 when hundreds of Muslim immigrants regularly travelled by the hill section railway from Badarpur to Lumding, in order to go to the Assam Valley for settlement. There have been many grossly exaggerated reports of the recent heavy stream of immigration into Assam, not merely in the Press and on the Platform, but also in the authoritative circles. It has been stated by some that in recent times, about 5 lakhs of Muslim immigrants came to Assam, 1½ lakhs to Cachar alone. A study of the census figures reveals how grossly exaggerated these reports were. The number of persons born in Bengal and enumerated in Assam in 1951 was itself as high as 573 thousand. 14 thousand were born in Jalpaiguri, which is now retained in India. As the number of persons in districts which are now included in West Bengal but which were enumerated in Assam at the earlier censuses was always very low it would not be fair to assume

that only 500 thousand born in districts now in Pakistan were censused in Assam. Thus at the present census we have only 99 thousand more. Assuming deaths among them in the last two decades, we cannot have more than 322 thousand as the approximate number of deaths among the 1931 immigrants. Hence the total number of immigrants (presuming it to be equal to the number of all Pakistan born persons) could not possibly exceed 430,000 for the entire two decades.

#### 61B. Muslim Immigration according to the Land Revenue Reports :

Useful information regarding immigration into and emigration from Assam is available in the Annual Land Revenue Administration Reports of Assam, from which the following is extracted to give a picture of the migration position year by year.

**1940-41**—There was no emigration but inter-district migration of cultivators occurred as usual. Assamese cultivators from the neighbouring districts continued to enter North Lakhimpur Sub-division in large numbers.

As regards immigration the influx of the East Bengal immigrants continued mainly to the districts of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong and Lakhimpur in the hope that as "landless" people reserves and khas lands would be opened to them for cultivation. These people have apparently misunderstood the object of the Development Schemes or have been misinformed about them and it is not unlikely that many of them will ultimately find their hopes unfulfilled as there are already old landless immigrants who will have to be given preference over the new comers. If the influx of immigrants continues unabated from year to year the Deputy Commissioners will find it extremely hard to control settlement. In Darrang and Kamrup many of these immigrants still remain as encroachers upon reserves and closed areas. When the Development Scheme operates these immigrants will have to be provided with lands within the scheme so that the reserves may be freed from all encroachments.

**1941-42**—The influx of Eastern Bengal immigrants was less marked than in previous years. The reasons are :—

- (1) unsettled conditions owing to the War;
- (2) the withdrawal of the Development Scheme.

**1942-43**—Owing to the acute scarcity of food in Bengal the influx of Eastern Bengal immigrants including a very large number of beggars and destitute persons, was considerable during the year. A large number of labourers from elsewhere also entered the Province for work under the Military authorities.

**1943-44**—There was no emigration. The influx of Eastern Bengal immigrants including a very large number and destitute persons continued as in the previous year. Large numbers of labourers from elsewhere entered the province for work on Military projects.

**1944-45**—Owing to increasing pressure on their village lands in Goalpara many Santhal and Bodo (Kachari) families of the Goalpara district emigrated to Darrang. The influx of East Bengal immigrants also continued during the year.

**1945-46**—As was the case last year, many Santhal and Boro Kachari families of Goalpara emigrated to upper Assam owing to the increasing pressure on their village lands in Goalpara. The influx of East Bengal immigrants also continued to some extent during the year. About 9,000 labourers from other provinces immigrated into the district of Sibsagar to work on tea gardens.

**1947-48**—The influx of East Bengal immigrants continued with great rapidity. The number was heavy in Goalpara, Darrang, Sibsagar and Nowgong districts. In Sibsagar, about 8,111 labourers migrated from other provinces to work in various capacities.

**1948-49**—The influx of East Bengal immigrants continued as before. In Sibsagar about 8,379 labourers migrated from other provinces to work in various capacities. There was no emigration except repatriation of Emigrant Labour.

**1949-50**—The influx of East Bengal immigrants continued as before from the beginning of the year. After the disturbances of January 1950, it was heavier till the Delhi Pact was signed. In Sibsagar 8,151 labourers migrated from other States to work in various capacities. In Garo Hills, the influx amounted to about 50,000, but most of them went to other districts of Assam Valley. The remaining immigrants remained in the Hills portion of the district. They are tribal people, viz., Hajons Koches, Dalus, Baniyas and Garos mostly from Mymensingh and Rangpur districts of East Pakistan.

These Land Revenue Administration Reports also give useful statistics of land in acres settled with immigrants other than *ex-tea* garden labourers, which are reproduced in the following Table 1.24.

TABLE 1.24

*Land (in acres) settled with immigrants other than ex-tea garden labourers*

(000's omitted)

Year	Assam Valley	Sadiya and Balipara	Cachar
1930-31	481	6	14
1931-32	509	4	14
1932-33	547	9	14
1933-34	575	7	13
1934-35	595	6	13
1935-36	609	6	14
1936-37	629	2	14
1937-38	652	6	14
1938-39	674	6	13
1939-40	696	6	14
1930-40	5,967	58	137 = 6,162
1940-41	696	6	13
1941-42	720	6	13
1942-43	746	3	14
1943-44	768	2	14
1944-45	775	6	14
1945-46	798	6	14
1946-47	818	6	14
1947-48	892	6	18
1948-49	1,139	8	23
1949-50	1,350	10	28
1940-50	8,702	59	165 = 8,926
1930-50	14,669	117	302 = 15,088

The table shows that in the years 1930-40, the vast amount of land, viz., 6,162 thousand acres were settled with East Bengal immigrants. Naturally the overwhelming majority of such settlement was in Assam Valley itself which alone accounts for as much as 5,967 thousand acres. In the next decade 1940-50 land settled was even larger in area, viz., 8,926 thousand acres out of which 8,702 thousand acres were settled in the Assam Valley alone and 165 thousand acres in Cachar. 59 thousand acres were settled with them in Sadiya and Balipara. Thus during the last 20 years 15,088 thousand acres were settled with immigrants, a figure almost unbelievable in its immensity for any other important State in India.

### 61C. Results of Muslim immigration :

Muslim immigration began merely as a result of the interplay of economic forces in East Bengal *vis-a-vis* Assam, though later it took on some political colour. The pressure on the soil of the East Bengal, some times the actual loss of their lands and even the homesteads by diluvion in their home districts, cheap and plentiful supply of virgin land in Assam, with the freedom of ryotwari settlement in place of expensive, small and uncomfortable holdings as tenants or under-tenants in East Bengal were the main factors. The advent of such immense numbers of immigrants could not fail to have far reaching consequences on the economic, political and social structure of Assam. They were hard working and good cultivators, whose arrival could not fail to benefit their new home in various ways. Mr. Higgins, a former Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, wrote\* :

“They do better cultivation than the local people and as such they are certainly beneficial to the country; since their advent the local people seem to be shaking off their old lethargy and they have created a novel sphere of competition.”

Mr. Bentinck, a former Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, paid them the following well-deserved tribute\* :

“In industry and skill they are an object lesson to the local cultivators; they have reclaimed and brought under permanent cultivation thousands of acres which the local cultivators had for generations past merely scratched with haphazard and intermittent crops or recognised as exigent of efforts beyond their inclination. The large undulating expenses of Char lands to be seen in late March or early April finely harrowed, weeded and newly sown are something to which the spectacle of ordinary Assamese cultivation is quite unaccustomed. They have besides their industry shown example of new crops and improved methods.” Another Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong, Shri P. G. Mukerji, wrote in the same vein ten years later† :

“They have opened up vast tracts of dense jungle along the south bank of the Brahmaputra and have occupied nearly all the lands which are open for settlement in this tract. These

people have brought in their wake wealth, industry and general prosperity of the whole district. They have improved the health of the country side by clearing the jungles and converting the wilderness into prosperous villages. Their industry as agriculturists has become almost proverbial and they extract from their fields the utmost that they can yield. Their care and love of cattle is also an object lesson to others. Government revenue has increased. Trade and commerce have prospered. The lakhs of rupees which annually pour into the district to buy their jute pass out from their pockets into those of the traders who sell them their food-stuffs and imported goods as well as into those of the lawyers and mahajans who look after their litigation and finance.”

From the demographic point of view, they led to an immense growth of population in Assam, at a rate greater than that of any other State except Travancore-Cochin and filled up the immense unoccupied areas of the Assam Valley.

These benefits naturally were derived at a price. Their hunger for land was so great that, in their eagerness to grasp as much land as they could cultivate, they not infrequently encroached on Government reserves and on lands belonging to the local people from which they could be evicted only with great difficulty. In the beginning they had their own way and there was some friction with the indigenous population, who did not like their dealings as neighbours. Afterwards when the land was not so abundant, their land hunger brought them into many conflicts and struggles in the economic sphere with the tribals and other indigenous people of Assam.

### 61D. The Line System :

The Assam administration attempted various devices to reduce the occasion of such conflicts. One such expedient was the famous Line System which was first mooted in 1916 and adopted in 1920. A Committee was subsequently appointed to review the working of the Line System, and it submitted a report in 1938. There were two notes of dissent in this Committee, differing from the majority view. One submitted by the Assamese members said, “These immigrants, with their grab for land and propensity for crime, soon proved a menace to the Assamese people who by this time would have been mostly driven off their lands in the affected districts but for the Line System”. A

\* 1921 Census Report, p. 41.

† 1931 Census Report, page 51.

second note of dissent submitted by the non-Assamese Muslim members of the Committee, on the contrary submitted, "The discriminate provisions create bitterness and resentment and perpetuate racial antagonism and put forward impediment to the growth of friendly relations between the two races".

The majority view considered it undesirable to relax restrictions on the Muslim immigrants in the matter where they should or should not take up lands. It was stated in the majority report that the habits and customs of Muslim immigrants acquired under a completely different system of land tenure and economic life in Bengal greatly differed from those of the people among whom they had come to settle and for the purpose of better administration and avoidance of collision as well as to protect the interests of the more simple minded and peace loving local people, especially the tribal races of Assam, it was desirable to retain the restrictions imposed by the Line System, with some modifications.

**61E. Amendment of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1948 :**

In the meantime many petty conflicts arose between the tribals and Muslim immigrants over land, cattle, grazing rights and practices, as also over social matters. The Assam Government made another attempt to resolve the growing tension by forming in 1948 Tribal Belts in different regions to protect the tribal people of Assam. The tribals (both Hill and Plains Tribals), in Assam are a very large and important element in the local population of Assam, their total population in 1951, being 1,735,245, (1,038,720 in the Plains and 696,525 in the Hills.). Among the many tribes are the Cacharis, the Bodos, the Rabhas, the Dafflas, the Akas, the Garos, the Khasis, the Khamphtis, the Abors, the Mishmis, the Nagas and many others. As S. K. Bhuyan, a great Assamese historical scholar points out\* : "The existence of these tribes on the borders imparts a unique distinction to the province of Assam, in their representing different grades of civilisations, different origins, customs and languages, but they add considerably to the worries of the administrators". The reason is simple, it being an accepted principle of Social Anthropology that these tribes, if brought into indiscriminate contact with the plains people of the locality, run the great risk of gradual extinction. Hence the

\* "Anglo-Assamese Relations" (1771-1826),—Dr. S. K. Bhuyan.

imperative necessity of creating these Tribal Belts by adding a new chapter X to the Land Revenue Regulation, Assam.

**61F. Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam), Act, 1950 :**

Very recently, an attempt to grapple with the problems of this huge Muslim immigration was made by passing the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam), Act, 1950 (Act X of 1950) in the Indian Parliament on 13th February, 1950, following an earlier January Ordinance on similar lines. The Act provided for the removal of any immigrant persons in Assam, excepting the displaced persons, whose stay was detrimental to the interest of the general public of India, or of any scheduled tribe in Assam. It was applied with wise restraint and great discrimination; cases under it did not exceed a low three-figure category, all naturally against the Muslim immigrants. Many occurred in Lakhimpur because the stay of some Pakistani Muslims employed in the Digboi oil area was considered to be a danger to the safety and security of the country.

**61G. Communal incidents in Assam, February—April, '50 :**

The measures described above failed to avoid and control the growing antipathy and bitterness between the immigrants and the indigenous population including the tribals. The gulf between their divergent view points and interests, to which the Report of the Committee, appointed to review the work of the Line System in 1938 drew pointed attention and to which references have already been made before, became wider as time passed. During the early years of the past decade, widespread encroachments by these immigrants on Government lands, grazing and forest reserves were allowed to happen during the regime of the Muslim League Ministry, when the Congress was in wilderness due to its policy of non-cooperation with the war efforts. When the latter returned to power in 1946 and began enforcing the revenue laws, especially the eviction of the unauthorized trespassers, this was stoutly and bitterly criticised by a section of the Muslims in the country as "intolerable oppression of the Muslim minority". The repercussions of the huge Muslim immigration on the social, political and economic life of Assam may well be left to future historians; suffice it to say here that it was an important cause of the communal incidents in Assam in early 1950.



The present political, constitutional and psychological climate of Assam is very adverse to any further Pakistani immigration into the State. Being foreigners now and faced with the impending pass-port system, the difficulties in the way of their coming will be even greater in future. That many hardy Muslim immigrants will yet run the gauntlet of these legal and administrative barriers and attempt to settle down in Assam, no one who has studied the course of their immigration can have any doubt.

#### 62. The immigration of Hindu refugees from Pakistan :

This is the proper place to discuss the recent immigration of Hindu refugees from Pakistan, which was by far the biggest migration stream into Assam during the last decade. However, in view of its importance, topical interest to the general reader as well as the Administrator, I have thought it fit to devote a separate chapter to this problem, viz., Chapter VIII, Displaced Persons. Nevertheless it must be remembered that the problem of the displaced persons from the point of view of the Census Report is essentially a demographic problem, a problem of an altogether new migration of a body of Hindus from across the frontiers, whatever be its political, administrative, constitutional, international and socio-economic significance.

#### 63. The Nepali immigrants :

The fourth and last sizable stream of immigrants is from Nepal; but of a total of 63,068 from "other territories", those born in Nepal and censused in Assam in 1951 are 56,572 against 88,306 in 1931, 70,344 in 1921 and 47,654 in 1911 in the pre-partitioned Assam. 1941 data are not available as there was no tabulation. Originally most of the Nepali settlers were retired soldiers of Gurkha Regiments and the rest of the immigrants from Nepal were temporary or periodic visitors, buffalo graziers and serving soldiers. Subsequently many took up land becoming cultivators either in place of or in addition to, grazing buffaloes and selling milk and ghee. The reasons reported for their leaving their country were (i) to get better means of livelihood and (ii) to escape compulsory service or labour in Nepal.

The birth-place table of the census under-estimates the number of the Nepalis in Assam.

Many children must have been born to the Nepalis during the decade; some also were born in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri and came thence to Assam. We can, however, take those speaking the Nepalese language as a fair test at any rate of the minimum number of Nepalis, because it is scarcely possible for anyone but a native of Nepal or his descendant to return as his mother tongue Nepalese or other language of Nepal. The number of speakers of Nepalese is nearly 125,320. It appears that at the present census people from Nepal have now preferred not to call their languages by different names like Gurung, Newari, Limbu, Magari, Khambu and Murmi. In 1931 the number of speakers of Nepali languages amounted to about 140,000. Thus both sets of figures viz., of those born in Nepal as well as of those speaking Nepalese unmistakably show a decline over their numbers in 1931. The sex disproportion among the Nepali men and women noticed at earlier censuses, however, seemed to decline. In 1921 the number of women was only about half the number of men. In 1931 the respective numbers were 59,000 and 30,000. At this census the numbers are 36,350 males and 20,222 females, i.e., a ratio of 64 males to 36 females. Darrang has the least un-desirable sex ratio of the Nepalis, namely 54:46 against 65:35 of Lakhimpur. There are about 10,000 Nepalis in Darrang and 12,000 in Lakhimpur, while the United K. & J. District has merely 9,500. Going back to language test United K. & J. district returns the largest number of Nepali speaking people 38,565 against Darrang 29,648 and Lakhimpur 22,446.

"It is doubtful whether Nepali settlers are beneficial to the country on account of their large number of buffaloes that frequently cause damage to village crops and by their wasteful methods of **Jhuming** for sugar-cane they impoverish the soil, after a very short time. On the other hand, although the fertility of the soil may have been reduced, the Nepalis by clearing heavy tree jungle for sugar-cane sometimes prepare the land for subsequent cultivation of rice by the Assamese. The Assamese also benefit on account of the Nepalis manufacturing Gur and various products of milk."

These words of a former Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur effectively sum up the gain as well as loss due to their immigration. In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills there



are many chaprasis, servants and labourers from Nepal; others follow the same callings as their brethren in the plains districts, keeping buffaloes and cattle or cultivating or acting as sawyers in the forest. The warning directed against artificially increased immigration of Nepalis into United K. and J. district by my predecessor in 1931 seems to have gone home. The advent of foreign population in the midst of a small tribe like the Khasis may have increased the revenue of the Siems, but it was not likely to prove an advantage in the long run on account of the damage done by the buffaloes of the graziers and also the damage to the countryside by the indiscriminate cutting down of forest to make room for the advancing and increasing herds. The vast grazing reserves of Darrang, Kamrup and Lakhimpur offer many attractions to the Nepali *Khutiwallas*.

In view of the Nepalese constituting the fourth most substantial immigration stream into Assam, I give below a table which gives the

number of persons born in Nepal and enumerated in Assam and its natural divisions as well as some important districts. This will help in reading at a glance the number of Nepal born people in some important districts :—

TABLE 1.25

*Persons born in Nepal and enumerated in Assam and its Natural Divisions*

(000's omitted)

	Persons	Males	Females
1. Assam	56	36	20
2. Assam Plains	39	24	15
3. Goalpara	4	3	1
4. Kamrup	6	4	2
5. Darrang	10	5	5
6. Lakhimpur	13	8	5
7. Assam Hills	17	12	5
8. United K. and J. Hills	9	6	3

## EMIGRATION

### 64. Emigration—General :

Emigration from Assam is of very small account, the total numbers being so small as 45,986 against 73,223 in 1931. There has been no change in the volume and direction of emigration since 1921. The places of their destination are given in Subsidiary Table 1.5 and are summarized in Table 1.15, (already given). About 72 per cent of them are found in adjacent states of Manipur, Tripura and West Bengal. West Bengal is actually responsible for the largest number of emigrants (19,570) from Assam. West Bengal owes its large proportion to the casual and temporary border movements from Goalpara and to a number of students and business men in Calcutta. The few hundreds Assam-born people found in Bihar and Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Madras are probably children of repatriated tea garden labourers and a few men of the educated classes and traders. In the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, are found a number of Hindus, especially Manipuris, who desire to spend their old age at holy places. Excepting West Bengal, our next door neighbour, the figures for other Part A States are negligible, e.g., Bihar (2,466), Uttar Pradesh (3,733) and Madhya Pradesh (1,669).

Unfortunately, the number of emigrants outside India is not available but it is surely not large. Of emigration to Pakistan, the Census gives no figures. This was never in the past of any importance. Paragraph 65, however, considers emigration of Muslims to Pakistan due to communal disturbances in early 1950. The much too over-crowded state of Eastern Pakistan, which sends out an immense number of emigrants to Assam itself, cannot have much attraction for the Assamese to go and settle there. Formerly, there was some movement to Burma in connection with trade and service. In 1921, 807 persons only were emigrants to Burma, their number rising to 1,113 in 1931. The movement to Burma from Assam was chiefly from the eastern districts, especially Lakhimpur and Tirap Frontier Tract. Nepal has no census figures and we cannot even guess the number of emigrants to Nepal.

### 65. Emigration of Muslims to Pakistan :

An unusual phenomenon which this census has to take notice of is the emigration of Muslims from Assam mainly due to political causes.

In the past Assam, especially the Brahmaputra Valley, used to be singularly free from

communal tension, not to talk of communal riots. The 1931 Census Report is the first one to refer to the remarkable and decided change for the worse that came over during 1921-31 about the relations between the Hindu and the Muslims communities. This was particularly noticeable in Sylhet though the phenomenon was visible even in the Assam Valley. The Muslims came to develop a separate tendency. The ever increasing communal bitterness and riots in other parts of India and the activities of some irresponsible elements in the Press had their inevitable repercussions in Assam. It is with this background that we have to view the rising emigration of Muslims from Assam. One of its most important causes is the immense Muslim immigration from East Bengal into Assam which did not fail to give rise to many tensions and conflicts, large and small, in political, economic and social spheres. Various expedients devised by the Assam administration like the 'Line System', balanced colonization schemes, amendments of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, Assam (Expulsion of Emigrants) Act 1950, as well as some political factors did not help to improve the existing situation. The continued and slow squeezing out of the Hindu minority from East Pakistan ever since the partition, followed by their arrival in Assam in pitiable condition and in far larger numbers, after the communal disturbances in East Pakistan in early 1950 led to similar but very minor occurrences in Assam.

As a result nearly one lakh of Muslims from Goalpara, Cachar, Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong left their homes and became displaced. A large number of the displaced Muslims did not leave the State at all. The Muslims displaced from predominantly Hindu area left their homes and shifted temporarily to comparatively safer Muslim majority areas of the same or the neighbouring district from where they returned to their homes in a few days' time as soon as communal passions abated a little. The number of displaced Muslims who are reported to have migrated to Pakistan was a little over a lakh. The areas from where Muslims were displaced and the approximate number of Mus-

lim families displaced from each are given below as reported by the State authorities :—

TABLE 1.26

*Number of Muslim Emigrants as reported by State authorities.*

Name of district	Displaced families	Actual numbers who left for Pakistan
Goalpara	27,000	60,000
Kamrup	10,800	20,000
Cachar	5,000	14,000*
Darrang	8,500	6,000
Nowgong	1,300	-
	52,600	100,000

The good sense of the people of Assam, however, soon re-asserted itself and due to the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement in April 1950, and adequate measures taken by the authorities in Assam for the maintenance of law and order, even those who had emigrated soon returned to their original homes.

#### 66. Balance of migration :

Subsidiary Table 1.6 reveals at a glance how overwhelming is the balance of immigration over emigration from Assam. Considering Assam *vis-a-vis* other States of India, including Pakistan, the total immigration is to the tune of 1,280,702 while emigration amounts to 45,986 only; hence there is an enormous balance of migration in favour of Assam to the tune of 1,234,716. I have already pointed out that the birth place statistics on which these figures are based and which give immigrants at 14.1 per cent of the total population leave their descendants who were born in the State after their arrival in Assam. They also leave out the emigrants who might have left during the decade. I give below Subsidiary Table 1.6 which is given in Part I-B of the Report.

\* Official figures of displaced Muslims are not available from Cachar with any degree of accuracy. The figure given here is an estimate which is considered fairly correct.

TABLE 1.27

*Migration between the State and other parts of India, (Subsidiary Table 1.6)*

State	Immigration			Emigration			Immigration minus Emigration	
	1951	1931	Variation	1951	1931	Variation	1951	1931
Assam	.. 1,280,702	1,317,850	—37,148	45,986	73,223	—27,237	+1,234,716	1,244,627
Manipur	.. 5,598	7,625	— 2,027	3,991	11,091	— 7,100	+1,607	—3,466
Tripura	.. 228,670	113,849	+114,821	15,593	..	..	+212,717	..

I give another Table 1.28 specially prepared by me which gives the same information after proper adjustment of 1931 figures. The

difference between the two may be noted. The basis of this adjustment is explained in Appendix 5.

TABLE 1.28

*Migration between Assam and other parts of India, (Subsidiary Table 1.6 adjusted)*

State	Immigration			Emigration			Immigration minus Emigration	
	1951	1931	Variation	1951	1931	Variation	1951	1931
Assam	.. 1,280,702	1,285,388	— 4,686	45,986	23,000	22,986	1,234,716	1,262,388

From these two tables we find that immigration for which the unadjusted figure for the State was 1,317,850 in 1931 now comes down to 1,285,388. The immigration figures in the tables are also different. The adjusted figure is only 23,000 against the unadjusted 73,223. On account of this drastic adjustment in the immigration figures, the ultimate difference in the balance of migration is very little.

#### 66A. Net Migration into Assam :

Net migration is the difference between the immigration into the State and emigration from it during the decade. The total number of immigrants during a decade is taken to be the number enumerated as immigrants in the particular census diminished by the corresponding number of the previous census and increased by a number representing deaths among the latter. The total number of emigrants during

the decade is also estimated in the same way. The figures of the Censuses 1901-1931 are available in the subsidiary tables included in the reports of the particular Census. Figures for the decade 1931-40 are not available because figures for migrants at the 1941 Census were not tabulated.

Appendix 5 makes an attempt to estimate the number under migration into Assam and Assam Plains division for the periods 1921-30 and 1931-50. From Appendix 5 we find that the total number of immigrants in the decade 1921-30 was 525 thousand whereas loss by emigration did not exceed 8<sup>th</sup> thousand; hence the net gain by immigration, making allowances for deaths among immigrants and emigrants at the uniform rate of 33 per cent for the decade, will be 517 thousand. By a similar calculation we get the net gain by migration for Assam Plains division at 498 thousand.

It is not possible to break-up the period of 1931-50 into 1931-40 and 1941-50 because of the absence of tabulation in 1941. Making due adjustments for the transfer of major portion of the population of Sylhet to Pakistan and for the estimated deaths both among immigrants and emigrants at the flat rate of 66 per cent for the entire period of two decades, we get the total number of immigrants as 916 thousand, total emigrants as 37 thousand and, therefore, the net gain by migration to be 879 thousand. For Assam Plains the total number of immigrants are 854 thousand, total number of emigrants 38 thousand and the net gain by migration is 816 thousand. These are enormous numbers and

few States comparable in area and population in India can boast of immigration on such a vast scale. This of course, will not apply to emigration which, as we have already seen, is very small in the case of Assam.

These estimates are based on calculations involving a number of assumptions. In spite of great care being taken to make these assumptions to fit actual facts as far as possible, they are bound to be only rough approximations. Hence the above figures should not be regarded as final and authoritative but only as broadly true, portraying trends rather than actual facts.

## SECTION V

### NATURAL INCREASE: BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

#### 67. Reference to Statistics and their accuracy:

The birth and deaths rates are the two remaining factors that determine the growth of population. Natural increase is the product of these vital processes, a detailed analysis of which is made in this section. The main statistics are to be found in the following Subsidiary Table in Part I-B of the Report:

Subsidiary Table 1.3 Mean Decennial Growth Rates during three decades-General Population.

Subsidiary table 1.7 gives variation in the natural growth. The Section also contains many other tables based on vital statistics as well as census data. The method of registration of the vital statistics of Assam and their accuracy or rather the lack of it, to which I shall frequently recur in this section, are treated at length in Appendix 4.

Let us here briefly recapitulate some of the facts mentioned in Appendix 4. There are no vital statistics for the entire Assam Hills Division except its 4 main towns. Thus population under registration numbers only 7,805,558 out of a total of 9,043,707, i.e., 86.3 per cent. It must be clearly realised that registration is compulsory only in the urban areas and the tea gardens while in the rural areas it is not at all compulsory. Even in the areas in the State where it is legally an offence not to register

births and deaths, the registration is extremely unsatisfactory and the percentage of omissions is large. We can well realise what we should expect in the rural areas where the recording agency is generally illiterate and subject to practically no supervision for check. In the rural areas, the recording agency is generally the chaukidars in Cachar and parts of Goalpara, while in the other districts it is the Gaonburas and mandals or the Mouzadars. Many of these persons, especially the village chaukidars are often illiterate, invariably low paid and overburdened with many other duties. Reporting of births and deaths is not obligatory on householders and the village chaukidar makes the entries of births and deaths in the pocket books with him as and when he comes to know of them. Being illiterate he has to remember the names of various diseases and even of the occurrences and only when he can get help of some literate man in the village these are entered in his pocket book or he has to wait for his fortnightly visit to the police station where the entry is made. No wonder in these circumstances the returns are very incomplete. This has been the considered view of all my predecessors and I have even greater reason to under write it, as we shall see later on. Not merely registration is unsatisfactory, but there is evidence to prove that it is becoming increasingly more so. No age specific rates are available in printed reports.

### 68. The birth rate of Assam Plains Division (1921-50):

Table 1.29 gives the annual birth rates of Assam Plains with their 5 yearly averages, as also the total number of births for each year since 1921. Col. 2 shows the census population for the years 1921, 1931 and 1941; for the inter-censal years, it is estimated by distributing inter-censal growth on a geometrical progression basis.

TABLE 1.29

#### *Population and Vital Statistics for Assam Plains Division*

Year.	Population.	Births.	Birth Rate Five Yearly per 1,000.	Average Rates.
1	2	3	4	5
1921	4,560,673	129,535	28.4	
1922	4,643,986	126,835	27.3	
1923	4,728,823	132,263	28.0	27.9
1924	4,815,207	139,896	29.1	
1925	4,903,170	132,094	26.9	
1926	4,992,740	138,908	27.8	
1927	5,083,946	135,942	26.7	
1928	5,177,818	140,509	27.1	26.9
1929	5,271,388	140,512	26.7	
1930	5,367,684	140,549	26.2	
1931	5,465,744	138,818	25.4	
1932	5,560,595	146,798	26.4	
1933	5,657,090	154,020	27.2	26.5
1934	5,755,261	155,570	27.0	
1935	5,855,135	155,273	26.5	
1936	5,957,742	150,976	25.3	
1937	6,060,113	156,697	25.9	
1938	6,165,276	152,898	24.8	25.2
1939	6,272,267	161,499	25.7	
1940	6,381,111	156,155	24.5	
1941	6,491,848	161,443	24.9	
1942	6,612,596	134,664	20.4	
1943	6,735,588	120,637	17.9	18.8
1944	6,860,870	105,164	15.3	
1945	6,988,480	109,927	15.7	
1946	7,118,465	117,425	16.5	
1947	7,250,885	114,977	15.9	
1948	7,385,731	114,143	15.5	15.5
1949	7,523,106	115,320	15.3	
1950	7,663,035	110,073	14.4	

Table 1.29 clearly shows a definitely downward trend in the birth rate ever since 1921. The 5 yearly averages in all quinquennia give lower figures for each succeeding one. The quinquennial average was 27.9 in 1921-25, falling to 26.5 in 1931-35 and 25.2 in 1936-40. 1941-45 shows a steep fall to 18.8, which persists in 1946-50 (15.5) as well. For the period 1921-1939, the difference between the highest birth rate (29.1) in the year 1924 and the lowest (24.8) birth rate in the year 1938 was 4.3 only: in the period 1939-1950, the difference is far greater, viz., 10.3 (from 25.7 in 1939 to 14.4 in 1950). The difference in the 5 yearly averages of 1921-25 and 1936-40 was only 2.7 but that between 1936-40 to 1946-50 is 9.7. Thus the downward trend is much greater in the last two quinquennia than in any preceeding one.

### 69. Decennial Birth Rates (1901-1950):

Table 1.30 below neatly sums up the decennial trends in the birth rates for the past 50 years.

TABLE 1.30

#### *Decennial Birth Rates for the Assam Plains Division (1901-50)*

Decennium (1)	Average Birth Rate (2)
1901-10	35.7
1911-20	32.3
1921-30	27.4
1931-40	20.9
1941-50	17.2

The figures for the first two decades include the whole of the district of Sylhet while those for the remaining 3 decades take into account only the truncated portion of Sylhet, which has been retained in India. This, however, is not likely to affect the trend in any appreciable degree. The recorded birth rate for Assam Plains has more than halved itself from 35.7 in 1901-10 to 17.2 in 1941-50. Considering the last three decades alone, which will rule out the vitiation due to the portion of Sylhet now in Pakistan, the tendency is the same. We notice a fall in the birth rate of the magnitude of 10.2 in the last 30 years, i.e., 37 per cent over the figure for 1921-30. The same trends are observed as regards the overall numbers of births in this Natural Division as well as in all its districts, without any exception. Please refer to paragraph 71B.

## 70. Birth rate of Assam compared with those of some Indian States and other countries :

Table 1.31, based on the Statistical Abstract of India, 1950, gives the 1942-45 average birth rate as also the birth rate for 1948 of Assam, India and all Part A States.

TABLE 1.31

*Birth Rate of Assam compared with that of other States of India*

	1942-45 average	1948
India	27.0	25.5
Assam	19.1	15.2
Bihar	22.2	18.6
Orissa	29.1	27.5
Uttar Pradesh	26.4	21.0
Madras	30.9	31.1
Bombay	33.8	33.9
Madhya Pradesh	38.3	33.6
Punjab	35.6	29.3

The birth rate of Assam (*i.e.*, Assam Plains) in Table 1.13 is far lower than that of India as a whole, and any of its Part A State. States like Bombay and Madras, far more advanced than Assam show birth rates of over 30, while Madhya Pradesh has a rate more than double the Assam figure of 19.1 for 1942-45. The birth rate of Assam in all the three decades is much less than that of all India, *viz.*, five year average rates for India for quinquennia 1921-25 and succeeding ones are 30.0, 33.8, 34.6, 33.5 and 28.3 in 1941-45. Though the Indian rate shows some fall in fertility in 1941 from that prevailing in 1921, the fall in Assam is far greater, reducing the birth rate of Assam to such a low level as 15.5 in 1946-50, lower than many Western nations which have taken to birth control long ago !

The percentage of error under registration is not known. The only thing we can infer from these figures is that the birth rate of Assam appear to be lower than other States of India. The actual figure, however, is extremely misleading. The recorded average birth rate in Egypt in the period 1931-48 was 40.8, while Ceylon in 1941-50 had a birth-rate of 38.6, Mexico of 44.9 and Palestine of 51.5\*. But the birth rate of this State must be classed as high.

\* United Nations Demographic Year Book, 1951 Table 7, Crude Birth Rates.

The region with the lowest rate, 17 per 1,000 in 1937, was North West Central Europe. The United States and Canada also had a registered birth rate of 17, Oceania had a birth rate of 20, Southern Europe of 23 and Japan 28†. This comparison with the most advanced and progressive countries of the world, which have adopted birth control long ago, clearly shows how utterly inadequate and ridiculously underestimated the birth rate figures for Assam are. They are not only inaccurate and underestimated, but also plainly unbelievable.

## 71. Causes of declining birth rate :

We have seen that there is a continuing drop in the birth rate of this State since 1921. But this drop is of a different nature from that which we find in the West or in U.S.A. and Canada or even in Japan. The general conclusion of recent investigations is that by far the largest part and probably the whole of the decline in these countries is to be attributed to the spread of family limitation. This factor is completely absent in this country for, with the exception of an infinitesimally small section of the upper city classes, nobody has even heard of voluntary family limitation. The explanation for the slackening of birth rate is, therefore, to be sought mainly in the direct and indirect effects of alteration of the age composition of population and its civil condition.

### 71A. Age Structure of the population :

The number of births taking place at a particular time in a particular community obviously depends upon the number of females of child-bearing age. Consequently, if the number of such females happens to be depleted at a particular time, the birth rate would be low and the birth rate will be high if the number of such females happen to be large. For example, a famine usually affects the young and old people very much and, therefore, the relative proportion of the young people including women of child-bearing age is unduly increased with the result that after the famine the birth rate goes up, but it gradually comes down as the depleted age-groups of young children reach the fertility period. It is, therefore,

† United Nations Economic and Social Council—Population Commission—Fifth Session—22nd May—2nd June 1950—Report submitted by the Secretariat—Chapter II—Fertility.

necessary for a proper understanding of the behaviour of the birth rates to appreciate the history of the famines and epidemics in the State and their effect on the age-structure of the population. "The age structure indicates the nature, not only of the present rates of fertility and mortality, but of the fertility schedules that have influenced the population for generations. The age structure of a population is the living record of its biological history"\*.

Fortunately, Assam never suffered from any famines. Blessed as it is with abundant rainfall, it has suffered more from floods than lack of rain, which is the principal cause of famine in India. This blessing has almost been compensated so far by the epidemics of Kala-Azar and influenza as well as other diseases which ravaged Assam till the other day. From past census reports, we find that Assam suffered a lot in the last decade of the last century from epidemics like Kala-Azar and other diseases, which ravaged the central districts of Assam and carried off nearly a quarter of the entire population of the district of Nowgong. They caused enormous tracts of cultivated land in Nowgong to fall back into jungle. The influenza epidemic of 1921 had also definite effect on the birth rates. The 1921 Census Report states†: "The recorded provincial crude birth-rates in 1919-20 were 30.5 and 31.5 against an average of 32.8 for the 5 previous years. This means a deficit of 25,000 to 30,000 births by influenza if that be regarded as the only disturbing factor. There were, however, other disturbing factors notably Malaria, following on the influenza epidemic in 1919; also the generally diminished vitality in the Surma Valley due to local troubles, already discussed. In any case the fall in the birth rates following influenza was not so great as in some other Provinces". Elsewhere it says‡:—

"Influenza was more fatal to persons in the prime of life. The low proportion of children under 5 years old represents the influence on the birth rate of lowered vitality and decreased proportion of women of child bearing age caused by influenza". Of course the primary effects of the epidemics is a tremendous increase in the

death rate. But, it has a secondary effect in the decreased birth rate due to miscarriages, decrease in the population of the age period from 15 to 40, increase in the number of widows and the general lowering of the vitality of the population which is evident from the enhanced death rate in the every age period in the year 1919.

The effect of the low birth rate will of course be further felt in the following 10 years, after the fewer women of child-bearing age grow up from childhood. The only favourable feature is a comparatively large number of survival of those aged 5 to 15. After the last influenza epidemic, Assam has been lucky and has not been visited by any serious epidemics during the last 30 years. The year 1925 was an *Annus Mirabilis* for Assam as it was in that year that victory over Kala-Azar was won and it was in that year too that the system of mobile epidemic units which have done excellent work in controlling the cholera epidemic was first sanctioned. What would have happened had Kala-Azar not been firmly controlled is dreadful to imagine. Expert authorities on the subject affirm that were it not for the widespread sterilisation of the peripheral blood due to treatment, the outbreak of Kala-Azar in the period 1917-27 would have been more widespread and more disastrous than that of the decade 1891-1901.

Thus we know broadly how the age structure is affected by the epidemics of Kala-Azar and influenza. It is not possible to determine the age structure exactly, in view of the vast change in the population of the State due to the separation of Sylhet.

#### 71B. Total Number of Births :

Table 1.32 below based on subsidiary Table 1.3 shows how the total number of births in Assam Plains has greatly decreased in 1941-50 compared with the two previous decades.

TABLE 1.32  
*Total Births (in thousands)*

Name.	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
Assam Plains	1204	1529	1357
Cachar	220	261	238
Goalpara	192	293	270
Kamrup	116	206	217
Darrang	161	176	141
Nowgong	105	113	109
Sibsagar	243	264	224
Lakhimpur	166	214	157

\* Notestein and Others, 'The future population of Europe and the Soviet Union 1944', page 108, (League of Nations, Geneva).

† 1921 Assam Census Report, p. 70.

‡ Ibid, pp. 65-66.



After reaching a peak figure of 1529 thousand, it has now fallen to 1204 in 1941-50 which is even less than that of 1921-30 by more than a lakh and a half. When we realise the mean population of the decade 1941-50 in thousands was 7,149 against only 5,979 in the previous decade and 5,013 in 1921-30 the fall in the total number of births in Assam Plains is truly astonishing. The fall is by far the greatest in the district of Goalpara in which in the past decade the total number of births has decreased by over a lakh, though its mean population has increased by over 112 thousand during the same period. Kamrup 50, Lakhimpur 48 and Cachar 41 are some other districts responsible for this tremendous fall in total births. Hence, the birth rate which is a quotient of total births divided by total population must fall if the former decrease with a simultaneous increase in the latter.

#### 71C. Number of married persons :

Since nearly all births occur to married women, the birth-rate is affected by the age at marriage, the proportions ultimately marrying, and the practices of widowhood, divorce and remarriage of widows. The details about these in respect of this state will be found in Chapter VI. Here it will suffice to say that marriage is universal and there has been no perceptible change in this universality during the last fifty years. But there has been a definite and significant rise in the age of marriage during recent decades and this constitutes one of the principal causes for the fall of the birth-rate. Table 1.33 gives figures relating to the number of unmarried persons per thousand of each sex.

TABLE 1.33  
*Unmarried persons per 1,000 of each sex*

	Women	Men
1921	449	546
1931	436	528
1941	459	559
1951	486	570

Table 1.33 reveals a definite trend of an increasing number of men as well as women in the unmarried group which must have its corresponding effect on the total number of births

as well as the birth rate. However, from Subsidiary Table 6.7, we find that the number of married females in 1951 per 1,000 of population was less than that in 1921 (413). It shot up to 443 in 1931 and remained at 430 in 1941. This is an important circumstances to be borne in mind in considering the drop in the birth rate during 1941-50.

#### 71D. The effect of death rates specific on the birth rates :

On account of the partition of by far the most populous district of Assam, viz., Sylhet, of which a small fraction is now retained in India, it has not been possible to work out the age specific death rates for even Assam Plains in the last three decades, excepting the infant mortality rates. They show a considerable drop. We can assume a similar tendency for young children group aged 0 to 4. All this has a direct bearing on the birth rate which is calculated per thousand persons of the population. It is obvious that when more people are found in the unproductive age-groups, because of their better survival than in the past, the calculated birth rate must fall. In short, the fall in the birth rate is partly attributable to the changing age composition of the people of Assam which has now a larger proportion of infants and young persons than ever in its history. This is clear from the fact that whereas previously infant mortality was 165 in 1921-30 it fell to 129 in 1931-40, registering a further steep fall to 115 in 1941-50.

Subsidiary Table 6.9 shows that the number of infants per thousand persons of population has greatly increased; from 285 in 1941, it now stands at 344 in 1951. All the districts in the Assam Plains Division with the solitary exception of Goalpara show a similar tendency.

#### 71E. Fertility of Women :

We have no recorded information on fertility in these States. A rough idea can, however, be attained from the following figures which compare the ratio of children in the age groups 0-4 to the women in the reproductive age group, viz., 15-45 during 1931-50. Figures for the earlier censuses are not given due to the vitiation on account of the Sylhet partition; only the 1931 figures have been suitably adjusted.



TABLE 1.34

*Ratio of children aged 0-4 to women aged 15-45*

Decades	Children 0-4	Women 15-45	No. of children per thousand women
1931	1,169,400	1,406,400	831
1941	1,239,700	1,716,700	722
1951	1,450,310	1,806,200	803

The fertility rate was very low during the decade 1921. The 1921 Census Report of Assam states that the mortality due to influenza was higher among women in the reproductive age group than among children and old persons and the epidemics had a selective incidence among women. There was a marked increase in the fertility during the decade 1921-30, but since then there has been a definite downward trend. The declining fertility rate indicates the pressure of economic conditions.

#### 71F. Opposing Factors :

At this Census we notice at least two factors which are working in opposite directions and which tend to an increase in the prevailing birth rate. First among them, which is not very significant is the slightly greater proportion of married women within the fertility period of 15-44 years as can be discerned from Subsidiary Table 6.8. This Table shows that the proportion of married women of age 15-44 increased slightly from 846 in 1941 to 852 in 1951. The second factor revealed by the figures is the downward trend in the case of widows as shown in the following Table 1.35.

TABLE 1.35

*Widows per 1,000 females*

Year	No. of widows per thousand females
(1)	(2)
1921	138
1931	121
1941	111
1951	97

#### 71G. The effect of other factors on the birth rate :

We have seen in Section 3 of this Chapter that the vital statistics cannot possibly be correlated with either the agricultural, the economic or the commercial conditions of the decade. This state has recently been importing food grains and undoubtedly the struggle for existence is getting harder with the increasing pressure of population on our food resources, but there is little reason to suppose that shortage of food has been an important factor in the reduction of birth-rate.

The rural-urban differentials will be described in Section 5 of Chapter III of this Report. Some differentials, of course, exist in the bigger cities but there is not a single one in the three States of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. The urban population is extremely small, being only 4.6 per cent in Assam. Of course, there has been a greater movement of population from the rural areas to the urban areas of the State but its impact on the birth rate is negligible, considering the small numbers involved as compared to the overall population.

Differences in fertility can also be studied by social class, occupation, literacy and religion. The census of 1951, does not provide any data for such study in respect of social class, literacy and religion. But from the data available in the previous censuses and from other investigations we know that whatever small differentials exist are primarily due to the prohibition of widow remarriage among the Hindus in general and the high caste people in particular. Occupational differential is also not important.

The birth-rate may have some correlation with the declining infant mortality tending to increase the number of surviving children and thereby the lactation period, but its effect, if any, will only be minimal.

To sum up, the major factors which brought down the birth-rate during the last decade have

been the decline in the proportion of females at the reproductive ages, the rise in the age of marriage of females, the decline in the number of married females and movement of adult male labour from rural to industrial areas without families. The deliberate control of reproduction with any idea of family planning or family limitation and by such means as contraception, has not been practised.

## 72. The Mean Age :

The mean age of the population actually denotes the average age of the persons who were alive on the date of the Census. The simple formula by which this age is derived from the single year age returns is to multiply each age by the total number of persons of all ages. The mean age thus arrived at for Assam at the 1951 Census is 22.8 years for males and 20.9 years for females and 21.9 years for all persons taken together. In 1941, the mean age was 22.8 for males, 21.5 for females and 22.2 for all persons. The mean age depends upon the proportion of the young and old people in the population. In 1921, the influenza epidemic fell most heavily on those in the prime of life and as a result the proportion of older people would be higher in 1921, than normally, thus increasing the mean age. In 1931 the old survivors of the epidemic died their natural death and the percentage of children increased with the result that the mean age went down. In 1951, when the influenza affected age groups entered fertility, the relative number of children again diminished and that of the old people increased showing a rise in the mean age. The mean age is the average age of the people alive at the time of the Census. If births and deaths were exactly equal it would correspond with the mean duration of life. It must not be confused with the death rate or expectation of life at birth; it can only be used to exhibit variation in the age distribution. Generally, higher mean age indicates fewer children or greater longevity or both; in a growing population with a large number of children the mean age of the living will be less than in a population in which children are relatively few.

## DEATHS :

### 73. Death Rate of Assam Plains 1921-50 :

TABLE 1.36

*Total number of deaths and quinquennial and decennial death rates during 1921-50*

Year	Total No. of deaths	Deaths per thousand	Five-year Average Rates	Ten-year Average Rates
1	2	3	4	5
1921	118,788	26.0		
1922	120,277	25.9		
1923	103,563	21.9	23.7	
1924	117,827	24.5		21.2
1925	98,370	20.1		
1926	104,316	20.9		
1927	100,441	19.8		
1928	95,827	18.5	18.7	
1929	88,769	16.8		
1930	94,508	17.6		
1931	96,682	17.7		
1932	100,651	18.1		
1933	101,790	18.0	18.0	
1934	99,978	17.4		
1935	109,775	18.7		17.4
1936	100,871	16.9		
1937	110,251	18.2		
1938	108,084	17.5	16.9	
1939	108,095	17.2		
1940	93,436	14.6		
1941	99,412	15.3		
1942	96,100	14.5		
1943	103,696	15.4	14.3	
1944	98,207	14.3		
1945	85,495	12.2		11.7
1946	77,587	10.9		
1947	63,482	8.8		
1948	62,611	8.5	9.0	
1949	64,338	8.6		
1950	60,989	8.0		

Table 1.36 gives the total number of deaths and the death rate per thousand for Assam Plains from the year 1921. The annual death rate has been specially worked out on the estimated population of this Natural Division year by year from 1921, taking the Census years as the basis and distributing the inter-census growth in a geometrical progression. The

population thus calculated is already given in Table 1.29. There is unmistakably a downward trend in the death rate after the year 1921. This downward trend is uneven and different, particularly in the quinquennium 1916-20, which includes the famous Influenza epidemic years of 1918-19. The quinquennium 1916-20 shows the highest five yearly average rate ever recorded in Assam (36.2) during the present century. Table 1.36 further reveals a steady decline as shown by its five yearly average figures :—

23.7 for 1921-25,  
18.7 for 1926-30,  
18.0 for 1931-35 and  
16.9 for 1936-40.

The figures for the quinquennia of the last decade are astonishingly low, being 14.3 for 1941-45 and 9.0 for 1946-50. The following Table 1.37 neatly sums up the downward trend with the exception of the decade, which contains the heavy mortality due to Influenza.

#### 74. Decennial Death Rate :

TABLE 1.37

##### *Decennial death-rates (1901-50)*

Decade.	Ten years' Average Rate.
1901-10	29.6
1911-20	31.3
1921-30	21.2
1931-40	17.4
1941-50	11.7

The death rate for the decade 1921-30 was 21.2 from which it fell to 17.4 in the succeeding decade. The decline in the past decade is really a precipitous one, bringing down the rate to 11.7 only. Thus the death rate of Assam Plains, declined by 18 per cent in the first interval against over 33 per cent in the past decade. This is indeed an encouraging fall if it were true.

Unfortunately these figures are grossly underestimated and thoroughly unreliable as we shall see towards the end of the Section. A large fraction of the decline is due to greater omissions

in the vital statistics in the last two decades as can be seen from Para 85. There we find an estimated net registration error of 93 thousand for the decade 1921-30, whereas the same for the next decade reaches the astonishing figure of 633 thousand.

#### 75. Infant mortality in Assam Plains :

TABLE 1.38

##### *Infant Mortality Rates for Assam Plains (1921-50)*

Decade	Deaths under 1 year of age	Births	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000).
1941-50	141,067	1,203,773	117
1931-40	227,605	1,528,704	149
1921-30	233,445	1,357,043	165

The above table which gives the average infant mortality rates recorded for the last three decades clearly shows that infant mortality is definitely on the decline. The rate which was 165 in 1921-30 fell to 149 in 1931-40 and registered a further steep fall to 117 in 1941-50. The fall in the first interregnum is 16 i.e., 10 per cent, whereas during the past decade it is double viz., 32 or over 21 per cent. Though this is an extremely encouraging fall showing considerable progress, we must bear in mind the unreliability and inaccuracy of the figures.

#### 76. Distribution of deaths in different age-groups of Assam Plains :

TABLE 1.39

##### *Percentage distribution of deaths in age-groups for Assam Plains*

Age Groups	1921-30		1931-40		1941-50	
	Total per cent.		Total per cent.		Total per cent.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Infants	233,445	(165)	227,605	(149)	141,067	(117)
		22.4		22.1		17.4
1-4	162,772	15.6	173,362	16.8	120,614	14.9
5-9	82,271	7.9	79,996	7.8	66,483	8.2
10-14	44,196	4.2	42,523	4.1	44,603	5.5
15 and above	520,002	49.9	506,127	49.2	439,150	54.0
Total of all ages	1,042,686	100	1,029,613	100	811,917	100

Table 1.39 shows that in line with the general tendency of the over-all death rates and infant mortality rates, percentage of deaths in the age-group 1-4 has declined, during the last three decades.

#### 77. Causes of the tremendous decline in the death rate :

Let us now examine the causes of the tremendous fall in the death rate of Assam Plains which is to the extent of 61 per cent as between 1921-25 and 1946-50. The causes of the tremendous decline in the mortality of Assam are harder to establish than the fact of decline itself. As Kingsley Davis puts it "One reason is that an adequate explanation embraces not one but several levels of analysis medical, economic, political, sociological. Another reason is that the causal factors are even more poorly measured than mortality itself; so that we are forced to explain the obscure by the still more obscure." \*

1. (i) The main cause of the fall we have already seen *viz.*, the decline in the infant mortality which forms such a large fraction of the total mortality. Any decline in the former is bound to substantially affect the general death-rate as well. Despite its failure to drop quite as fast as general mortality, infant mortality has nevertheless been reduced substantially since 1918, according to official returns. The percentage decline in infant mortality is not so great as that in the case of general mortality. For example, the death rate has declined by 45 per cent in 1941-50 over the decade 1921-30, the percentage decline in infant mortality from 165 in 1921-30 to 117 in 1941-50 is only to the tune of 30.

(ii) Another cause we have already seen while discussing Table 1.39, which shows that not merely infant mortality has declined but also the mortality rate for young persons as well.

#### (iii) Decline in deaths in Assam Plains during 1921-50 :

The total number of deaths in Assam Plains was 1,043 in 1921-30, 1,030 in 1931-40 and 812 in 1941-50 (in thousands). Thus the total number of deaths shows a slight decline of

\* The population of India and Pakistan by Kingsley Davis, p. 38.

13,000 from the 1921-30 to 1931-40 whereas the decline from 1931-40 to 1941-50 is as great as 218,000, in spite of the fact that the mean population has itself greatly increased in these two decades from 5,979 to 7,149 thousand. Subsidiary Table 1.3 shows that the decrease is the largest in Goalpara to the tune of 64,000 followed by Kamrup 49,000, Lakhimpur 44,000 and Sibsagar 26,000. If the total number of deaths decline while the population goes on increasing the death rate which is a quotient of the former divided by the latter multiplied by 1,000 must decline.

(iv) One of the main causes of the decline in death rate of India, *viz.*, the control of Famine is not of great consequence so far Assam is concerned. The uncertainty of the monsoon, which has been characterised as "the biggest single factor influencing life in India" is fortunately absent from Assam, blessed as it is with plentiful, (rather over plentiful), rain. Hence it has not to suffer from this while the rest of India, pays the price of the "annual gamble in rain", with all its capricious characteristics of an Eastern potentate of medieval ages.

#### 78. Control of epidemics and of diseases :

Lastly we shall review the most important cause of the decline in the death rate, *viz.* the control of diseases, especially epidemic. Rivalling famine as a widespread killer in the Indian sub-continent is the epidemic disease.

"The only diseases for which registration can be said to have reached a fair standard of accuracy are cholera, smallpox and plague, these being the most common and most fatal of the epidemic diseases which periodically devastate India." \* For most other diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia, syphilis, etc., there is no way of knowing what the incidence and prevalence are. Indian sub-continent enjoys the dubious distinction of being the world centre for at least three highly epidemic maladies—plague, smallpox, and cholera—all of which have been brought under control in most other countries. In addition the population pays a

\* Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India, Annual Report, 1932, p. 28.

§ Here I have freely drawn on Kingsley Davis very useful and informative discussion in his "Population of India and Pakistan".

heavy toll to countless other diseases about which we have less accurate information. Among the outstanding are tuberculosis, malaria, and dysentery. Let us briefly discuss each of these diseases.

#### 78A. **Plague :**

The most spectacular decline in the number of deaths due to the three universally notifiable epidemic diseases has been registered by plague. It is partly due to inoculation and the destruction of infected rats but the most important factor responsible for the improvement, according to a theory favoured by medical authorities, is that a new race of rats immune to plague has been evolved and the immunity is the greatest in places which have suffered most severely from plague. Sir John Megaw asserts that we do not know why the decrease occurred, or whether the disease will flare up again in future years; nor do we know why it has never invaded some areas especially Orissa and Assam. India has made notable contributions to the understanding of the disease and potential measures of control e.g. anti-plague vaccine developed by Haffkine. Sulfa drugs and lately Streptomycin, controlling infected fleas and rats and the use of cynogas fumigation for rat holes have also proved effective in reducing plague incidence.

#### 78B. **Smallpox :**

The incidence of the disease in Assam is now fairly low. 825 deaths were recorded during 1946 as against 3,838 in 1945, a year of heavy incidence. Sibsagar and Lakhimpur recorded a higher incidence during the first half of the year. Mass vaccination was vigorously carried out both in urban and rural areas. In the words of the Public Health Commissioner's Report for 1934, "The continued prevalence of this easily preventable disease is a measure of passive resistance to public health improvement".

#### 78C. **Cholera :**

The total number of Cholera cases treated during the triennium 1944-46 was 1,568 only against 10,591 in 1941-43. Thus there was a considerable decrease in the total number of cases treated during this period. The incidence of the disease was the lowest in 1946 since 1937. As Sir John Megaw says, there is "no serious disease which is easier to eradicate..... If all cases of cholera were notified immediately and placed under proper control, the disease would soon disappear".

The one remedy which, from a layman's standpoint is likely to yield the best results is the provision of pure drinking water in the villages. This may take decades to be applied to all villages of Assam. The other conditions which favour the continuance of the disease are, of course, the appalling insanitary conditions, the lack of effective control over the provisions and sale of food, the poor quality of the food which is within the means of the people, their ignorance of the rules of health and the inadequacy of medical relief in villages. In other words the control of cholera requires an all-round improvement in the general conditions of our life. If the cost of supplying pure drinking water is beyond our means, the cost of introducing the other improvements is much more so. It is again a case of vicious circle set up by economic factors. Due to the bleak picture of environmental sanitation in the rural areas they contain ideal conditions for the spread of Cholera. Poverty, apathy, and ignorance are still so great that there seems no immediate prospect of large-scale improvement. If village sanitation were the only means of controlling cholera, the disease would remain virtually unchecked.

#### 78D. **Kala-Azar :**

The total number of cases treated for Kala-Azar was 14,265 with 63 deaths in 1946, against 8,804 with 54 deaths in 1945 and 5,400 cases with 46 deaths in 1944. A large number of new cases were brought under treatment. Nowgong was the worst affected district. Approximately 23,000 cases were treated as against 19,256 during the previous year. We have already seen how Kala-Azar, sometimes called Black Fever, caused by a parasitic flagellate that infests the spleen, liver, and bone marrow, spread into the central districts of Assam and wiped out nearly one-fourth of the entire population of Nowgong during 1891-1901. At least one-fourth of the arable land went out of cultivation in five years. Whole villages were wiped out or deserted, their land reverting to jungle. This great potential source of death in India, especially in Assam, has been avoided by modern medicines. In 1923 great success was attained with organic compounds of antimony and the period of the treatment shortened to one fourth of that required by the earlier treatment of simple antimony.

Although the incidence in an area can be brought to a very low level by mass treatment of all cases, it cannot be altogether eliminated because infection is maintained during inter-epidemic periods, by post-recovery skin infection (dermal leishmaniasis) and non-response to treatment in a few cases. Consequently, attention has recently turned to the vector. Modern insecticides are effective against the sandfly and its larva, and research is now under way to assess the value of spraying as a public health measure against the Kala-Azar in villages.

We now review some of the non-epidemic diseases.

#### 78E. Malaria :

The problem of malaria in India is of such a colossal magnitude that isolated measures can have little permanent value. Large scale operations for a planned control over a number of years are necessary to achieve results. Apart from the untouched problem of malaria under rural conditions, the large scale development of irrigation schemes and the building of dams for the supply of hydro-electric power will have to be carefully studied with a view to control their malaria producing potentialities and steps taken beforehand to safeguard against the rise of malaria incidence. Malaria deaths are usually registered under "fevers", along with deaths from many other causes. The exact proportion of "fever" deaths due to malaria is unknown, but it is estimated to be as high as one-third. According to Col. Sinton, Director of the Malaria Survey of India, over a million persons die of malaria every year and if the number of those who fall easy victims to other diseases owing to the debilitating effect of this disease is also taken into account, "there seems" in the words of Col. Sinton, "little doubt that malaria, by its combined direct and indirect action, is responsible for at least 2 million deaths each year in India." According to Sir John Megaw "Malaria causes more sickness and loss of working-power than any other diseases in India." It constitutes the major public health problem in India, from the point of view both of morbidity and mortality. It is widespread especially in the riverine plains, and the Himalayan foothills. The immediate problem in India is so enormous that no dent has yet been made

on it by preventive or curative methods. According to the Bhore Committee the supply of quinine was only about one-eighth of the minimum requirement. Although not much progress has been made in the past in solving the malaria problem of the subcontinent, the battle is beginning to be waged now with new weapons. On the side of chemotherapy, experiments made in 1946 indicate that paludrine can cure a primary attack with a single administration of 300 milligrams, "which revolutionizes treatment of malaria in rural areas". One or two 100 milligram tablets per week will give protection against infection. Chloroquin, "Camaqi," and plasmoquin also promise results far more powerful than quinine. On the side of vector control, the work recently reported from Bombay is extremely interesting. The Bombay Provincial Malaria Organization was created by the provincial Government in 1942. It conducted intensive studies of the vector species (*A. fluviatilis*) in Kanara district. When DDT became available in 1945 and 1946, an area comprising 6000 square miles in Dharwar and Karara districts, with about 1,200 malaria-stricken villages and a population of over a million, was subjected to experiment. "The results showed that a dose of about 60 milligrams per square foot DDT indoor residual spray once in 2 months in the case of *fluviatilis*, and once in 6 weeks in the case of *culicifacies*, is efficacious in keeping them down below the critical density for transmission. For the first time in the history of malaria epidemiology, parasite rates and infant parasite rates exhibited signs of approximation to zero point in hyperendemic areas in the tropics.

"Spleen and parasite rates have dropped considerably. In several villages they are now less than 10 per cent. as against 50 to 100 per cent. in the past. More than all, infant parasite rates are almost nil, about 0.8 per cent. in the sprayed villages as against 15 per cent. in unsprayed villages. The approximate cost of the scheme is about 6 to 8 annas (12-15 cents), per capita per annum."\*

During 1949 it is estimated that about half a million cases of Malaria have been saved in the State of Bombay at a total cost of Rs. 18

\* D. K. Viswanathan, "Activities of the Bombay Provincial Malaria Organization 1942-47" in proceedings of the fourth International Congress in Tropical Medicine and Malaria Vol. 1, p. 876-77.

lakhs. Never before has it been possible to demonstrate that the prevention of diseases is worthwhile measure even from monetary considerations\*. The Chief Conservator of Forests, Madhya Pradesh in a note given in the Annual Report of the Public Health Department in the C. P. and Berar 1946 describes how anti-malaria operations practically converted that tract into a healthy forest colony in the Raipur district and how greatly it increased the efficiency of forest administration as a whole.

In Assam the total number of cases treated for Malaria was 711,146 in 1945 against 785,358 in 1945 and 801,577 in 1944, with 153,189 and 296 deaths respectively. The largest number of cases treated in 1946 was reported from the district of Goalpara (136,264). Thus the total for triennium for 1944-46 was 2,298,081 against 1,749,423 in 1941-43. A malaria section started in 1945 was further strengthened by more staff and equipment under the post-war Development Scheme. Anti-malaria measures were extended to more areas and the use of DDT was introduced for the first time. Quinine was distributed through the Public Health Department. Packets of mepacrine tablets with instructions for use were supplied to postal and other agents for sale in rural areas and were becoming increasingly popular.

#### 78F. Tuberculosis :

With the exception of malaria, tuberculosis probably kills more people in India than any other single disease. Nobody knows exactly how many it does kill, because it is difficult to diagnose and register properly. "The value of the recorded figures is greatly vitiated by the fact that correct diagnosis of the cause of death is rarely obtained and numerous deaths from tuberculosis are without doubt registered both in towns and in villages as due to fevers or respiratory disease. Indeed, it may safely be assumed that the majority of the deaths from tuberculosis are registered under one or other of these groups. There exists also the general tendency to conceal the cause of death in tubercular cases for fear of social disabilities or of

quarantine and other disinfection measure."\* Because of inaccurate registration the estimates of the deaths due to tuberculosis ranged from 50,000 to 820,000 per year in British India during the period 1932-41, or roughly from 7 to 13 per cent of all deaths.

**Tuberculosis is essentially a poverty disease.**

"The disease constitutes a real index," to quote Sir John again, "of the standards of life which prevail in countries in which it has become established for long periods of time." It spreads rapidly among ill-nourished and badly housed populations and correspondingly diminishes when people are well-fed, well-housed and cleanly in their habits. Cleanliness in habits is only partly a matter of means but their being ill nourished and badly housed is entirely a question of means. Lack of proper nourishment can be due to the ignorance of food value rather than to the lack of food itself, but the cause of malnutrition on a large scale—on the scale on which it exists in India—is always the direct outcome of poverty.†

The extent of under-nourishment in India is a matter of estimate and Sir John's own estimate is that only 39 per cent of the population in India is well nourished, the rest being either poorly or badly nourished. The distinction between the two last categories cannot but be very thin; the fact of a vast majority of our people being in a state of semi-starvation is generally admitted. Bad planning and the lack of sanitary conscience account partly for bad housing in India; but the abominable dwellings in which most of our people live are the most conclusive evidence of their not having the means to live any better. Sir John speaks of the villages as "virgin soil" for the spread of tuberculosis. They are not only a "virgin" but also an exceedingly fertile soil for the growth of the disease and if the apprehension that the infection is extending its hold in India is well-founded, the prospect of our people is truly terrible.‡

What is most alarming about tuberculosis in India is that, in contrast to most of the diseases already discussed, it seems to be increasing at a rapid and alarming rate. It is well known

\* D. K. Viswanathan, "Activities of the Bombay Provincial Malaria Organization 1942-47" in proceedings of the fourth International Congress in Tropical Medicine and Malaria Vol. 1, pp. 878-79.

\* Public Health Commissioner with Government of India, 1932 Annual Report.

† Vide Dr. Gyan Chand, "India's Teeming Millions".



that isolated rural people, when brought into contact with the outside world through the growth of cities, industry, and rapid transport, show an extreme susceptibility to tuberculosis.

B. C. G. Vaccine is now widely used to fight the menace of tuberculosis in several European countries, North America and in India as well. In the United Kingdom and the United States of America an almost revolutionary technique in the detection of early cases have been developed in the form of Mass Miniature Radiography. This radiography enables the detection of the disease in its earliest ambulatory non-infective stages, so that the patients can be treated and cured before they reach the stage when they constitute a social menace and a public health problem.

#### 78G. Survey of progress of Tuberculosis treatment in Assam :

An X-Ray Plant was established in the Reed Chest Clinic at Shillong in 1940. In the next year the Government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 84,038 for the establishment of Provincial T.B. Clinic and the Sanatorium at Shillong, which was opened in 1942 with an accommodation for 28 patients which was soon raised to 47 in 1944. Another Clinic was opened at Dibrugarh soon afterwards.

A Scheme for T. B. survey in the urban areas was planned and works started in September 1948, in the Jorhat town. A temporary T. B. Clinic was started in Jorhat Civil Hospital to treat the patients suffering from T. B. A Mass Radiographic plant and a Rotary Converter were purchased during 1948 and the plants fixed at Jorhat Civil Hospital. During the same year the accommodation at the Reed Provincial Chest Hospital at Shillong was increased. In 1949 B. C. G. Vaccination was started and work undertaken at various centres like Gauhati, Nowgong, Sib-sagar, Shillong, etc. Medical Officers of various industries and those of the Government and some Missionary Societies were trained by the Scandinavian team and the work was undertaken in the respective areas by the trained personnel. The Government of Assam have taken the work of B. C. G. Vaccination in right earnest and it is hoped that this sustained drive may go a long way in giving immunity to the people from this scourge of humanity.

#### 79. Causes of High Mortality Rates :

Though the recorded death rate of Assam in the last decade is as low as 11.7, the actual death rate must have been very high, as we can find from Appendix IV. The recorded rates are very low on account of large omissions over wide areas.

#### The low vitality of the people and the threat of new diseases :

The fundamental reason for the tremendously high actual death rate in Assam is the low vitality of the people, which is again mainly due to their stark poverty. "When a people are in what may be called an exposed state, *i.e.*, liable to death owing to their stamina being undermined by the necessary incidents of their everyday life, if they do not die of one disease they will die of another. Medical science may save them from kala-azar by the discovery of antimony treatment and vaccine protect them against infection from cholera, but it can save the lives only of those who are in sound health otherwise. But people, who have to live on starvation diet, in hovels without sunshine or air and whose conditions of existence are otherwise sordid in the extreme are doomed to die long before their time. If they do not, it may be repeated, die of one disease they will die of another. When liabilities are in excess of assets, liquidation must be the normal process of redressing the balance. Our people are in a continual process of liquidation. Their vital reserves are low. They have to draw upon them for their every-day normal existence, and when a contingency arises—and such contingences must be numerous under the conditions prevailing in India—which requires the use of reserve powers, they cannot hold their own. They, of course, hold out for some time, but they cannot hold out long. The flesh in India is heir to more numerous ills than in most other countries and as the flesh is weak and the will to live none too strong, premature death must be the fate of most people in this country."\*

In view of the long prevalent inflationary prices telling heavily on the poor sections and the continued shortage of food supplies in India with famine or near famine conditions prevailing over some parts of the country at all times,

\* Dr. Gyan Chand, *India's Teeming Millions*, p. 129.

the above words of Dr. Gyan Chand have even more significance today than they had a decade ago. In view of the low reserves of vitality any little emergency is likely to give them a knock-out blow.

The Netherlands has the lowest rate, namely 8.1. Denmark, Norway, Canada, New Zealand show rates of less than 10\*. In the United States, the crude death rate for 1940 was 10.8†. The mortality rates in these countries were also at one time as high as in India but improvements in the social, economic and health conditions have brought about a fall to the present low level. Famine and chronic food shortage have been largely eliminated and epidemic diseases have been controlled by improvements in environmental sanitation and personal hygiene and by development of medical science. The conditions in this and other undeveloped countries are still very different. The position with regard to India has been well summarized in the report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, 1946, as follows:

“The maintenance of the public health requires the fulfilment of certain fundamental conditions which include the provision of an environment conducive to healthful living, adequate nutrition, the availability of health protection to all members of the community, irrespective of their ability to pay for it and the active co-operation of the people in the maintenance of their own health. The large amount of preventible suffering and mortality in the countries is mainly the result of an inadequacy of provision in respect of these fundamental factors. Environmental sanitation is at a low level in most parts of the country, malnutrition and under nutrition reduce the vitality and power of resistance of an appreciable section of the population and the existing health services are altogether inadequate to meet the needs of the people, while lack of general education and health education add materially to the difficulty of overcoming the indifference and apathy with which the people tolerate the the insanitary conditions around them and the large amount of sickness that prevails.‡”

\* United Nations—Demographic Year Book 1948—Table 20.

† T. L. Smith—Population Analysis—Page 234.

‡ Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, Government of India Press, 1946.

The result is that the epidemics of plague, small-pox, cholera and malaria even now occur frequently and devastate the population.

To avoid the high actual mortality and the consequent terrible misery and economic loss to the nation, the health plans must, from the beginning, lay special emphasis on preventive work. Leeway here to be made up is tremendous as can be judged from the following Table 1.40 which gives the various classes of health personnel, their available numbers at present and their ratio to the present population both in the United Kingdom and in the British India.

TABLE 1.40

*Available health personnel in the U.K. and (British) India*

Class of Personnel	Number available now	Ratio of Nos. in column 2 to the present population of British India (300 millions)	Existing ratio in the United Kingdom
1	2	3	4
Doctors	.. 47,500	1,6,000	1,1,000
Nurses	.. 7,000	1,43,000	1,300
Health Visitors	.. 750	1,400,000	1,4,770*
Midwives	.. 5,000	1,60,000	1,618†
Qualified Pharmacists	.. 75	1,4,000,000	1 pharmacist to 3 doctors
Qualified Dentists	1,000	1,300,000	1,2,700

We have indicated above certain dark shadows in the health picture of the country. If it were possible to evaluate, with any degree of exactness, the loss India suffers annually through avoidable waste of valuable human material and the lowering of human efficiency through malnutrition and preventible morbidity, the result would be so startling as to arouse the whole country and create and enlist an awakened public opinion in support of the war against disease. According to one authority the minimum estimate of the loss to India every year from Malaria alone lies somewhere between 147 and 187 crores of rupees. A nation's health is perhaps the most potent single factor in

\* Based on 1935 figure.

† Based on 1943 figure.

determining the character and extent of its development and progress and any expenditure of money and effort on improving the national health is a gilt-edged investment yielding not deferred dividends to be collected years later, but immediate and steady returns in substantially increased productive capacity.

The health programme must, from the beginning, lay special emphasis on preventive work. The creation and maintenance of as healthy an environment as possible in the homes of the people as well as in all places where they congregate for work, amusement or recreation, are essential. So long as environmental hygiene is neglected, so long as the faulty modes of life of the individual and of the community remain uncorrected, so long as these and other factors weakening man's power of resistance and increasing his susceptibility to disease are allowed to operate unchecked, so long will our towns and villages continue to be factories for the supply of cases to our hospitals and dispensaries.

The need is urgent for providing as much medical relief and preventive health care as possible to the vast rural population of the country. The debt which India owes to the tiller of the soil is immense and, although he pays the heaviest toll when famine and pestilence sweep through the land, the medical attention he receives is of the most meagre description. The time, has, therefore, come to redress the neglect which has hitherto been the lot of the rural areas. The doctor of the future should be a "social physician protecting the people and guiding them to a healthier and happier life". He should place prevention of disease in the forefront of his programme and should so combine remedial with preventive measures.

It is also essential to secure the active co-operation of the people in the development of the health programme. The idea must be inculcated that, ultimately, the health of the individual is his own responsibility and, in attempting to do so, the most effective means would seem to be to stimulate his health consciousness by providing health education on the widest possible basis as well as opportunities for his active participation in the local health programme.

P. 42—13.

According to modern conceptions, health education includes "not only instruction in purely health matters, but also those activities which are likely to influence favourably an individual's health knowledge, health attitude and health habits. Health education must promote health and health consciousness, and these are best achieved when health practices become part of an individual's daily life".

There is no doubt that in regarding national health as the foundation on which any plan of national reconstruction must be based, if it is to yield optimum results, the Health Survey and Development Committee was merely repeating an axiomatic proposition\*.

#### 80. The Natural Increase :

The natural population is a common term used by statisticians to indicate the number of persons living at a particular time who were born in a particular area and is obtained by adding the number of emigrants to the total population enumerated in the area in question and then subtracting the number of immigrants. The natural increase of a population is the difference between its births and deaths during a particular period. The rate of natural increase is obtained by the use of crude birth and death rates. It is obvious that if the population were disturbed by no causes save births and deaths and if the record of births and deaths were accurate, the population of the last Census *plus* the births and *minus* the deaths of the decade would equal the population enumerated at this Census.

Subsidiary Table 1.7 gives the variation in natural population of Assam during the last two decades. As the 1931 figures have not been adjusted, I give below two tables one of which gives the variation in natural population unadjusted and the other showing the variation in natural population adjusted.

\* In this para. I have drawn freely on the Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, which is a mine of useful information on the subject.

GENERAL POPULATION

TABLE 1.41  
*Variation in Natural population (unadjusted)*

State	1951				1931				Percentage Increase (+) or Decrease (—) (1931-51) in Natural Population
	Recorded population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural population (2+4-3)	Recorded population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural population (6+8-7)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Assam	.. 9,043,707	1,343,770	45,986	7,745,923	8,802,251	1,411,138	73,223	7,464,336	+ 3.8
Manipur	.. 577,635	6,282	3,991	575,344	445,606	9,053	11,091	447,644	+28.5
Tripura	.. 639,029	229,090	15,953	425,892	382,450	114,383	..	..	..

TABLE 1.42  
*Variation in Natural Population of Assam (adjusted)*

State	1951				1931				Percentage Increase (+) or Decrease (—) (1931-51) in Natural Population
	Recorded population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural population (2+4-3)	Adjusted population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Natural population (6+8-7)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Assam	.. 9,043,707	1,343,770	45,986	7,745,923	7,344,456	1,283,708	21,833	5,082,281	+52.3

The unadjusted figures give only 3.8 per cent increase in the natural population during the last 20 years whereas the adjusted figures force it up to as high as 52.3 per cent.

81. **Natural Increase—Annual Rates (1921-50) :**

TABLE 1.43

*Annual Rates of Natural Increase (1921-50)*

Year	Birth Rate per 1,000	Death Rate per 1,000	Rate of Natural Increase per 1,000
1921	28.4	26.0	2.4
1922	27.3	25.9	1.4
1923	28.0	21.9	6.1
1924	29.1	24.5	4.6
1925	26.9	20.1	6.8
1926	27.8	20.9	6.9
1927	26.7	19.8	5.9
1928	27.1	18.5	8.6
1929	26.7	16.8	9.9
1930	26.2	17.6	8.6
1931	25.4	17.7	7.7
1932	26.4	18.1	8.3
1933	27.2	18.0	9.2
1934	27.0	17.4	9.6
1935	26.5	18.7	7.8

Year	Birth Rate per 1,000	Death Rate per 1,000	Rate of Natural Increase per 1,000
1936	25.3	16.9	8.4
1937	25.9	18.2	7.7
1938	24.8	17.5	7.3
1939	25.7	17.2	8.5
1940	24.5	14.6	9.9
1941	24.9	15.3	9.6
1942	20.4	14.5	5.9
1943	17.9	15.4	2.5
1944	15.3	14.3	1.0
1945	15.7	12.2	3.5
1946	16.5	10.9	5.6
1947	15.9	8.8	7.1
1948	15.5	8.5	7.0
1949	15.3	8.6	6.7
1950	14.4	8.0	6.4

Table 1.43 shows that the annual rates of natural increase do not conform to any pattern nor do they portray any definite trends. The rate of natural increase for 1922 was as low as 1.4, but it shoots up to 6.1 in the very next year, only to fall to 4.6 in 1924. For the years 1928 to 1941, the rate remains fairly high, giving an approximate average of over 8 per cent, but it

shows a drastic fall for the war years 1942-45. It reaches the very nadir in 1944, viz., 1 per cent, a rate never yet reached in the entire period of 30 years. In the latter half of the past decade, natural increase again shows once again a steady rate of 6.5 per cent per annum.

## 82. Decennial Rates of Natural Increase :

TABLE 1.44

### *Decennial rates of Natural Increase (1921-50)*

Year	Birth rate	Death rate	Rate of Natural Increase
1921-30	27.4	21.2	6.2
1931-40	25.8	17.4	8.4
1941-50	17.1	11.7	5.4

According to Table 1.44, the natural increase was 6.2 per cent in 1921-30, 8.4 in 1931-40 and 5.4 in 1941-50; whereas the population of Assam Plains gives the percentage rates of increase of 19.9, 18.8 and 20.2 respectively for the same periods. The disparity between these rates is due to a tremendous excess of immigration over emigration and the under registration of births and deaths in varying degree in different districts.

## 83. Census growth and Natural Increase compared :

Table 1.45 given below compares the census growth and the natural increase for Assam Plains for the last three decades :—

TABLE 1.45

### *Census growth and natural increase compared for Assam Plains Division*

	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
(1) Census growth	1,313,710	1,026,104	905,071
(2) Natural increase	391,856	499,091	314,357
(3) Difference, i.e., Net Migration-cum- Registration Error	921,854	527,013	590,714

For the decade 1921-30, census growth is as high as 905 thousand against a recorded natural increase of 314 thousand. It shows that census growth was nearly three times the natural increase. In 1931-40, the position was slightly different. Against a recorded natural increase of 499 thousand, census growth was 1,026 thousand, i.e., less than double. The position in the past decade approximates more closely

to that in 1921-30; against a natural increase of 392 thousand only. The census growth is as high as 1,314 thousand, i.e., more than three times the natural increase.

The difference between census growth and natural increase for the decade 1921-30 was as high as 591 thousand from which it fell to 527 thousand in the next decade. In 1941-50, the difference is 922 thousand, nearly twice the figure for the earlier decade. In all the three decades, there is a tremendous difference between the natural increase and census growth showing clearly that other disturbing factors are at work for the figures. One of the reasons is that actual births exceed registered births and actual deaths exceed registered deaths. This gives the registration error. Besides, the population of a decade is also disturbed by the balance of migration. These two factors account for the difference between the census growth and the recorded natural increase. This difference is called subsequently the **migration cum registration error**, which is the algebraic sum of the two factors (i) the balance of migration, and (ii) errors in the vital statistics. This factor of migration-cum-registration error is examined in Para. 85, where it is given as a percentage rate of the mean decennial population of the last three decades.

## 84. More about Birth and Death rates (Mean Decennial) :

Finally I shall briefly review the mean decennial birth rates, death rates and rates of natural increase shown in Subsidiary Table 1.3. These rates will slightly differ from the rates of percentage increase on which our previous discussion was based.

### 84A. Mean decennial birth rates (1921-50):

The mean decennial birth rates for the last three decades based on the registered births are extracted below in Table 1.46 :—

TABLE 1.46

### *Mean decennial birth rate for Assam and its Natural Divisions*

State/Natural Division.	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
Assam	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
Assam Plains	16.8	25.6	27.1
Assam Hills	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.

n. a. = not available.

According to these more refined birth rates calculated on the population of the decade, there was a very small fall of the magnitude (0.5) in the first interval, but the fall in the mean decennial birth rate between 1931-40 and 1941-50 is extremely striking, being of the order of 8.8. Thus the fall during the first interval was less than 2 per cent over its base 1921-30 whereas the fall in the second interval is to the tune of 34 per cent. This trend towards a precipitous fall is observed in all the districts particularly in Goalpara, Kamrup, Lakhimpur and Cachar. The fall in the case of Goalpara is particularly noticeable as it attains the unbelievable figure of 8.45 per cent, by far the lowest of all districts.

#### 84B. Mean Decennial Death Rates (1921-50) :

The mean decennial death rates for the last 3 decades are given below in Table 1.47.

TABLE 1.47  
*Mean Decennial Death Rates for Assam and its Natural Divisions*

Name	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
Assam	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Assam Plains	11.4	17.2	20.8
Assam Hills	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

n.a. = not available.

Table 1.47 shows that the mean decennial death rate showed a fall of less magnitude in the first interval than in the second. The magnitude was to the extent of 17.1 per cent over the figure of 1921-30 whereas it was more than double, viz., 34 per cent in the second interval. The decline in the mean decennial death rate is particularly marked in the district of Goalpara, during the past decade followed by Lakhimpur and Kamrup.

#### 84C. Mean decennial rates of natural increase :

I give below mean decennial rates of natural increase as well as census growth for the last 3 decades :—

TABLE 1.48  
*Decennial rates of natural increase and census growth*

Name	1941-50		1931-40		1921-30	
	Natural In-crease rate	Growth rate	Natural In-crease rate	Growth rate	Natural In-crease rate	Growth rate
Assam	n.a.	17.4	n.a.	17.9	n.a.	17.6
Assam Plains	5.5	18.4	8.4	17.2	6.3	18.1
Assam Hills	n.a.	11.7	n.a.	22.5	n.a.	15.0

n.a. = not available.

The decade 1931-40 shows the highest rate of natural increase (8.4) against 5.5 in the past decade and 6.3 in the decade 1921-30. The reason is simple. Where the birth rate shows a great decline, the death rate too has been falling, though not in the same proportion, hence the rate of natural increase which is equal to the former minus the latter shows the effect of the variations in a smaller degree. Yet the decennial rate of natural increase has increased over its 1921-30 figure by 33 per cent, falling in the past decade by about the same percentage.

#### 85. Migration-cum-Registration Error :

As in the case of figures of births, deaths and natural increase, the migration-cum-registration error is available only for the Assam Plains Division and embodied in columns 29 to 31 of Subsidiary Table 1.3. It is the difference of the mean decennial rate of natural increase. The migration-cum-registration error is as high as 11.8 in 1921-30, falling to 8.8 for 1931-40 and again rising to 12.9 for 1941-50. The only figure which shows a negative sign in all districts is the figure of minus 0.8 for Cachar in 1921-30. It is due to the fact that registration in Cachar is better than in other districts of the Assam Valley, and at the same time, it does not suffer from any migration. Hence the figure of 0.6 for the decade 1931-40 may be taken as its registration error alone. Therefore the rate of 0.8 in 1921-30 merely implies that there must have been emigration from Cachar to the tune of 1.4 per cent over its mean population of 778,000 for the decade 1921-30. The registration in other districts of Assam Valley is not so accurate, and all these districts attract tremendous numbers of migrants. Migration is the least in Sibsagar, pulling down its figure in 1941-50 to 6.4 and 1.3 in 1931-40. Goalpara shows 4.6 in 1941-50 which is even lower than that of Sibsagar. The simple explanation is as we have already seen the emigration of Muslims from Goalpara following communal disturbances of February-March, 1950, many having failed to return by the Census date. This gives it by far the lowest mean decennial growth rate of all districts in the Assam Plains Division, for the present decade.

An attempt to break up this combined migration-cum-registration error into its two constituent factors, (i) net migration, and (ii) net registration error, is made in Appendix 5 given

at the end of this volume. Table 1.49 summarises the finding of Appendix 5.

TABLE 1.49  
*Net migration and registration error*

(000's omitted)

	1931-50	1921-30
Net migration and registration error	1,449	591
Net migration	816	498
Net registration error	633	93

The difference between the net migration and registration error and the net migration furnishes the net registration error during 1921-30 and 1931-50. It must be borne in mind that in calculating the net migration, it has been assumed that there has been no emigration outside India. Further the division in the two groups is dependent on the death rates assumed for emigrants and immigrants; of course, reasonable care has been taken to estimate and apply appropriate rates.

#### 86. Growth of population finally explained :

Now we are in a position to analyse the growth of population in Assam Plains Division during the last three decades. Table 1.50 gives the mean decennial growth rates.

TABLE 1.50

*Mean decennial growth rates during the last three decades (Assam Plains)*

Particulars	1931-50	1921-30
Mean decennial growth rate	+35.6	+18.1
Mean decennial rate of natural increase	+13.9	+ 6.3

Particulars	1931-50	1921-30
Migration-cum-registration error.	+21.7	+11.8
Net migration	+12.3	+ 9.8
Net registration error	+ 9.4	+ 2

The recorded rate of natural increase and net registration error gives the real-natural increase of the Assam Plains natural division which is 23.3 for 1931-50 and 8.3 for 1921-30. Growth of population is obviously composed of the sum of corrected natural increase and the net migration.

It is necessary to point out that the net registration error should not be recorded as directly providing an index of the magnitude of the birth registration error or death registration error separately. It is merely the algebraic sum of the latter two.

#### 87. Trend of natural increase for 1951-60 :

In view of the extremely defective vital statistics of Assam, reference to which are made in the whole section, it is difficult for any one to attempt to predict the trend of its natural increase. The birth rate is likely to remain more or less the same or decline slightly; with a slightly greater decline in death rate. With migration playing a major part in explaining the growth of Assam, it becomes even more difficult to anticipate or predict the rate of natural increase. We can be more confident regarding decline in death rate by new and improved practices as well as other scientific inventions; but people are still exposed to recurrent food shortage and scarcity conditions from time to time. Unless food production in the State is substantially increased, and diet of the people made more balanced and nutritive, the hope for a further real fall in the death rate may remain unfulfilled.

## SECTION VI

### LIVELIHOOD PATTERN\*

#### 88. Eight Livelihood Classes :

Table 1.51 given below gives at a glance a complete picture of the livelihood pattern of Assam and its Natural Divisions, according to

the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme 1951 prepared by the Registrar General and reproduced in full in Part II-B of this Report. The eight Livelihood Classes into which the people of the State are divided and

\* The Section is based mainly on Subsidiary Table 1.8 and Table B-1. Chapter IV, Section I discusses in detail the accuracy of the economic data collected at the Census, and the definitions of the terms used.



which will be frequently referred to hereafter, are as follows :—

#### Agricultural Classes :

- I. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned; and their dependants.
- II. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly un-owned; and their dependants.
- III. Cultivating labourers; and their dependants.
- IV. Non-cultivating owners of land; agricultural rent receivers; and their dependants.

#### Non-Agricultural Classes :

Persons (including dependants), who derive

their principal Means of Livelihood from :—

V. Production other than cultivation.

VI. Commerce.

VII. Transport.

VIII. Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources.

From the livelihood point of view the economic pattern is divided into two broad categories, Agriculture and Non-agriculture. For the sake of convenience 'Non-agriculture' is used to indicate all means of livelihood other than Agriculture. In future in discussing these livelihood Classes they will often be referred to as Class I, Class II, and so on.

TABLE 1.51

#### *Livelihood Pattern of Assam and its Natural Divisions*

Livelihood Class	Assam		Assam Plains		Assam Hills	
	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent
I	5,235,791	57.9	4,278,031	54.8	957,750	77.4
II	1,158,254	12.8	1,104,618	14.2	53,636	4.3
III	157,343	1.7	123,338	1.6	34,005	2.7
IV	81,604	0.9	75,597	0.9	6,007	0.5
Agriculture I-IV	6,632,992	73.3	5,581,584	71.5	1,051,408	84.9
V	1,327,551	14.7	1,282,133	16.4	45,418	3.7
VI	353,066	3.9	324,708	4.2	28,358	2.3
VII	151,569	1.3	107,373	1.4	8,196	0.7
VIII	614,529	6.8	509,760	6.5	103,769	8.4
Non-Agriculture V-VIII	2,410,715	26.7	2,223,974	28.5	186,741	15.1
Total Population	9,043,707	100	7,805,558	100	1,238,149	100

#### 89. Livelihood Pattern of Assam and its Natural Divisions :

The outstanding characteristic of the economic pattern of the State that emerges from Table 1.51 is very clear. Out of its total population of 9,043,707, an overwhelming majority, i.e., 6,632,992 or 73.3 per cent depend on Agriculture

while 2,410,715, i.e., 26.7 per cent only depend on occupations other than Agriculture. Thus with regard to the principal means of livelihood of the people of the State the primacy of agriculture remains unchallenged. These overall and percentage figures are, however, subject to one vital limitation, mentioned in the next paragraph.

#### 90. Livelihood Pattern of Assam compared with that of other Part 'A' States :

TABLE 1.52

#### *Livelihood Pattern of Assam compared with that of other Part 'A' States*

Serial No.	State	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BELONGING TO LIVELIHOOD CLASS									
		Agriculture					Non-Agriculture				
		I	II	III	IV	I-IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	V-VIII
1	INDIA	47.2	9.0	12.3	1.4	69.9	10.4	6.0	1.6	12.1	30.1
2	ASSAM	57.9	12.8	1.7	0.9	73.3	14.7	3.9	1.3	6.8	26.7
3	UTTAR PRADESH	62.3	5.1	5.7	1.0	74.2	8.4	5.0	1.4	11.0	25.8
4	BIHAR	55.3	8.3	21.9	0.6	86.0	3.9	3.4	0.7	5.9	13.9
5	WEST BENGAL	32.3	12.0	12.3	0.6	57.2	14.5	9.3	3.0	15.1	42.8
6	MADRAS	34.9	9.6	18.2	2.2	64.9	12.4	6.7	1.7	14.3	35.1
7	BOMBAY	40.7	9.7	9.0	2.0	61.5	13.8	7.6	2.2	14.9	38.5
8	MADHYA PRADESH	49.5	4.5	20.4	1.6	76.0	10.6	4.4	1.5	7.5	24.0
9	PUNJAB	38.8	16.1	7.7	2.1	64.7	7.4	9.1	1.0	17.7	35.3
10	ORISSA	59.5	5.9	12.3	1.5	79.3	6.3	3.0	0.5	10.9	20.7

Table 1.52 shows that the percentage of population of Assam belonging to agriculture is lower than that of Bihar (86.0), Orissa, (79.3), Madhya Pradesh, (76), and Uttar Pradesh, (74.2). Assam stands fifth amongst the Part 'A' States of India. As may be expected the State of West Bengal, (57.2), dominated by the heavy industry and non-agricultural population of the city of Calcutta has the smallest percentage of people depending on agriculture followed by Bombay, (61.5), Punjab, (64.7), and Madras, (64.9). These four States enjoy primacy under non-agriculture with their 42.8, 38.5, 35.3 and 35.1 per cent respectively, against 26.7 of Assam. Uttar Pradesh has 25.8, Madhya Pradesh, 24, Orissa, 20.7 and Bihar hardly 14. Assam, therefore, occupies exactly the middle position in the Part 'A' States of India, regarding the dependence of its people on agriculture or non-agriculture.

A reader may get the impression that Assam is definitely more industrialised and less dependent on agriculture than some of the major States of India. This is more apparent than real because large numbers of its immense tea garden population forming about 12 per cent of the total population of Assam are excluded from agriculture and counted under non-agriculture. This, no doubt, is correct in one sense, because tea is an industry and has some features in common with other industrial undertakings. It must, however, never be forgotten that the tea industry is predominantly agricultural in character and rural in atmosphere requiring a very small factory population, though needing a large labour force for the actual plantation of tea. The tea garden population lives in villages which are in no way distinguishable from the neighbouring rural areas except that tea takes the place of rice and the presence of the factory and the manager's bungalow with their modern facilities like electricity and water-supply are nowhere to be seen in rural areas. If the tea garden population is added to the agricultural population the proportion under Agriculture in Assam will jump up to 85, and the proportion under Non-agriculture will fall to 15. This will make Assam the most agricultural State of all Part 'A' States in India, with the solitary exception of Bihar.

## 91. Agricultural Classes in Assam :

### 91A. Livelihood Class I—Owner-Cultivators :

Amongst the four Agricultural Classes the Owner-cultivators, included under Livelihood Class I, represent the largest number, viz., 5,235,791, nearly three-fifth (57.9 per cent) of the entire population of the State. It should be clearly borne in mind that **ownership of agricultural land for purposes of the 1951 Census includes every tenure which involves the right of permanent occupancy of land for cultivation.** All Raiyats, Tenants and Jotedars having occupancy rights. Privileged Tenants and Occupancy Tenants in the temporary settled districts of Assam, e.g. cultivators enjoying temple land too are included under Class I. It is on account of this definition of ownership of land that we find a comparatively larger number of people under Livelihood Class I and a smaller number of people under Classes II, III and IV than would have been the case if we had followed the position according to Revenue laws and regulations. The Zamindars and landlords really owned estates and not the lands in the estates, which were really always possessed by the innumerable people of the Livelihood Class I, for the purpose of cultivation. Assam by and large is a temporarily settled State with the raiyat-wari system of land revenue; it has some permanently settled lands only in the district of Goalpara and Karimganj subdivision of Cachar. The proposed abolition of zamindari from these areas is not likely to affect much the livelihood pattern of the population as revealed at the present Census except that persons belonging to Livelihood Class IV will further decline in numbers. In view of this clarification it is not at all surprising to find that States like Uttar Pradesh, (62.3), and Orissa, (59.3), surpass Assam inspite of having zamindari settlements there. The livelihood pattern reflects, not the legal position either as landlord or tenant but the actual occupancy of land for the purpose of cultivation. All tenants enjoying occupancy rights in their lands were straightway considered as owner cultivators.

### 91B. Livelihood Class II—Cultivating tenants :

All Raiyats, Tenants and Jotedars having occupancy rights as well as Privileged and

occupancy tenants in the temporary settled areas of Assam being included under Class I, Class II includes only patta-holders, bargadars, adhiurs and ejardars. Thus a large number of people who are legally tenants having been included under Livelihood Class I, Class II is sadly depleted.- It, however, includes annual patta-holders as well as all other patta-holders whose pattas are not periodic. In spite of this depletion, Class II is the second largest among the agricultural livelihood classes of Assam but is less than Livelihood Class V in number. It contains as many as 1,158,254 persons *i.e.*, 12.8 per cent of the population of Assam against 1,327,551 or 14.7 per cent included under Class V. Among Part 'A' States only Punjab with 16.1 per cent for Class II surpasses it. Assam is predominantly a raiyatwadri area, where land was available for settlement to its indigenous population and the immense numbers of East Bengal Muslim immigrants who poured in during the last four decades. This accounts for the very small proportion of its people returned as cultivating tenants. Where land is available a farmer will naturally prefer to cultivate his own land to cultivating somebody else's either as a tenant or an agricultural labourer. This also explains the extremely low percentage of people working as agricultural labourers.

#### 91C. Livelihood Class III Agricultural Labourers :

We have just seen the reasons why the proportion under this class is extremely low. Actually 157,343 persons or 1.7 per cent only of its entire population has been returned as agricultural labourers. Most of them are in a position now rather rare in the rest of India, of owning their own plots of land. This coupled with a desire for social prestige by returning themselves as owner-cultivators rather than as agricultural labourers accounts for the fact that Assam has by far the lowest percentage of its population in this class compared with that for the whole of India, which is as high as 12.3, while Bihar has 21.9, Madhya Pradesh, 20.4, Madras, 18.2, Orissa, 12.3 and West Bengal, 12.3. Uttar Pradesh, (5.7), and Punjab, (7.7), are the only other States with a low percentage. In Chapter IV, Section V while dealing with agricultural labourers and their dependants, we shall have an opportunity to examine this class in greater detail.

#### 91D. Livelihood Class IV—Non-cultivating Owners of Land and Agricultural Rent-receivers :

This is by far the smallest class in Assam. It is gradually diminishing, with a prospect of a still further diminution in future with the prospect of the abolition of Zamindari by law in Goalpara and Cachar. Only 81,604 persons were returned as agricultural rent receivers *i.e.*, 0.9 per cent of the total population. We have already examined its position *vis-a-vis* Class I. Assam is a predominantly temporarily settled State; permanent settlement prevails only in the Karimganj sub-division of the reconstituted district of Cachar and the district of Goalpara.

#### 92. Non-Agricultural Classes :

##### 92A. Livelihood Class V—Production other than Cultivation :

Livelihood Class V, (Production other than cultivation), returns 1,327,551 or 14.7 per cent of the total population. This class alone constitutes more than half the total number of people under Non-agriculture—55 per cent to be exact. For a predominantly agricultural country like India, which has only 10.4 per cent of its people under this class, this appears to reveal a satisfactory state of affairs. Among Part 'A' States of India, Assam is a close second to West Bengal, (15.4), which is by far the most industrialised State in India, and has the largest proportion of people under non-agriculture. Bombay, 13.8, is third, with Madras, 12.4, and Madhya Pradesh, 10.6, Bihar having the lowest percentage of 3.9; but as I have already remarked this is only apparent and not real. Nearly 12 per cent of Assam's population is supported by tea industry which is by and large agricultural in its nature and scope. If tea is taken out from livelihood Class V the figure for Assam under this class will be hardly 2.7 and Assam then will be dislodged from its second rank to the last amongst Part 'A' States. It is to be remembered that Livelihood Class V also includes people deriving their principal means of livelihood from such industries as stock raising, rearing of small animals and insects, plantation industries (such as orange, banana and other plantations apart from tea), forestry and wood-cutting, hunting and fishing, which are included in Division "O" of the Industries and Services

Classification explained in Part II-B of the Report. In other words Industries akin to and associated with agricultural activities are also included in this class along with numerous other industries of Divisions 0 to 4. Details of distribution of the people engaged in the industries under these Divisions will be found in Subsidiary Tables 5.8 to 5.12 discussed in Chapter V.

#### 92B. Livelihood Class VI—Commerce :

Commerce or Livelihood Class VI, returns 353,066 or 3.9 per cent of the people. It is the fourth largest among the Livelihood Classes and has a total strength equal to Classes III, IV and VII combined; yet the percentage in Assam is much smaller than that of the whole of India, (6.0), and is lower than most of the Part 'A' States of India, except Bihar, (3.4), and Orissa (2.9); the highest is as high as 9.3 in the highly commercialised State of West Bengal followed by Bombay (6.7). The poor means of communications in Assam are discussed in the next para. They also mainly account for the very poor performance of Assam under commerce. Backward Assam has few large commercial concerns, banking and insurance houses. There is very little of high-powered commerce. Being completely land locked it is deprived of any addition to its income by export or import trade enjoyed by the maritime States. What little trade it had before the partition has also been greatly disrupted thereafter due to the frequent dislocations in communications, the difficulties of movement across East Pakistan, the influx of refugees and the restrictions imposed at the borders on the movement of persons and goods. The location of the head offices of many tea garden companies at Calcutta also makes a dent in its commercial population.

#### 92C. Livelihood Class VII—Transport :

With 115,569 persons or 1.3 per cent of the population, Transport contains a lesser number and percentage of people than any other Class in Assam except Class IV. The reasons are not far to seek. The vast area of Assam, most of which is occupied by hills and dales, wastes and sub-montane tracts with an area under forest larger than any other Part 'A' State of India, the vagaries of the Brahmaputra and the freedom and levity with which it flows down the plains from Pasighat to Dhubri and beyond,

the poor means of communications especially on its northern bank, the absence of first class roads and bridges, (the Brahmaputra even now remains the only major river of India unbridged for its entire length through Assam), are some of the factors responsible for Assam having perhaps the poorest means of communications of any major State in India. The north bank of Brahmaputra may well compare with the north bank of the Ganga in Bihar; but it is the former which is poorer in communications. India returns 1.6 per cent under Transport, but Assam has only 1.3, against the Punjab, 1.0, Orissa, 0.5 and Bihar, 0.7 only. The maximum percentage of population in this Class of any State is found in West Bengal, 3. The comparatively small number of people under Transport attracts attention. Here we should note that under the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme, all railway employees are not classified under transport. As the Scheme classifies individuals and not the establishments in which they are employed railway employees, who are employed on manufacture, assembly and repairs of railway equipment, are shown under Livelihood Class V, whereas those employed on construction works under the railway are shown under Livelihood Class VIII, respectively. Only those railway servants and employees not falling under these two broad categories are classified here.

#### 92D. Livelihood Class VIII—Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources :

All services and professions which have not been already classified under the preceding seven categories are lumped together here. Under this class are found 614,529 persons or 6.8 per cent of the total population, fourth largest among the Livelihood Classes, containing nearly as many people as are included under Livelihood Classes III, VI, and VII. Here Assam has the lowest proportion of population among Part 'A' States with the solitary exception of Bihar (5.9); India has 12.1. The highest percentage under this category is shown by the Punjab (17.7) and West Bengal (15.1).

#### 93. Livelihood Pattern of General Population in Natural Divisions :

The livelihood pattern in the Assam Plains Natural Division is substantially the same as that revealed by the State as a whole with minor variations. In Assam Plains the percentage of

population dependent on agriculture is 71.5 while it is 28.5 for non-agriculture; thus the percentage under agriculture in Assam Plains is lower than that in Assam by 2 and that under non-agriculture correspondingly larger. 54.8 per cent of the total population is found under Class I, 14.2 under Class II, 1.6 under Class III and 0.9 under Class IV. Among the non-agriculture Classes, it is 16.4 for Livelihood Class V, 4.2 for Class VI, 1.4 Class VII and 6.5 for Class VIII.

In the Assam Hills Natural Division the percentage of population dependent on agriculture is far higher, 84.9, and that under non-agriculture correspondingly lower, 15.1 only. The figures need cause no surprise. Whatever industries Assam has *e.g.*, Tea, Oil, Coal, Rice mills, Match or Wood factories, they are in the Assam Plains. There is practically no industry worth its name in the Hills; they are poorer in means of communications and transport and, therefore, also in trade and commerce than the plains. Opportunities for earning one's bread by some miscellaneous source or by taking to a service and profession are few and far between in the Hills. Again land in the Hills is owned by the community, tribe or village rather than the individual. Hence, Livelihood Class IV is only half its proportional strength in the Plains, whereas agricultural labourers are slightly larger because of the more limited opportunities for owning land individually. All these factors are responsible for the fact that a preponderatingly large proportion, *viz.*, 77 per cent is included under Class I or Owner-cultivators, a proportion considerably larger than all Agricultural Classes combined either in Assam or its Plains. The same accounts for the fact of the percentage of population in Assam Hills under Livelihood Class II dropping to so low as 4.3 against 14.2 in Assam Plains and 12.8 in Assam. Practically the complete absence of any industry in Assam Hills Division accounts for its having only 3.7 per cent of its population under Livelihood Class V against 16.4 in Assam Plains. Thus the percentage of population in Assam Plains included under Class II is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times that in Assam Hills; for Class V the percentage in Assam Plains is nearly 5 times that in Assam Hills.

Assam Plains has a larger percentage of its population under Livelihood Class V or under

Commerce and Transport than Assam as a whole. Whatever the commerce and whatever few means of transport and communications Assam has are mostly in the plains; hence, its percentages under these two classes are nearly double those shown by Assam Hills. The population of Assam Hills Division is frankly and avowedly agricultural. Among the non-agricultural classes more than 55 per cent are included under Class VIII, *i.e.*, Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources.

#### 94. Salient Features of the Livelihood Pattern of Assam Districts :

The livelihood pattern of the districts reveals substantially the same features as those of their Natural Divisions.

TABLE 1.53

#### *Livelihood Pattern of General Population of Districts*

Serial No.	District	Agricultural (per cent)	Non-Agricultural (per cent)
1.	Cachar	59.9	40.1
2.	Goalpara	85.2	14.8
3.	Kamrup	80.4	19.6
4.	Darrang	70.5	29.4
5.	Nowgong	85.4	14.6
6.	Sibsagar	64.5	35.5
7.	Lakhimpur	54.6	45.4
8.	United K& J Hills	67.7	32.3
9.	Naga Hills	94.1	5.9
10.	Lushai Hills	93.0	7.0
11.	Garó Hills	95.0	5.0
12.	United Mikir & North-Cachar Hills	94.0	6.0
13.	Mishmi Hills	65.7	34.3
14.	Abor Hills	60.4	39.6
15.	Tirap Frontier Tract	69.2	30.8
16.	Balipara Frontier Tract	55.5	44.4
17.	Naga Tribal Area	97.6	2.4

Table 1.53 gives the broad economic pattern of the districts under 'agriculture' and 'non-agriculture' as percentage of the total population. Goalpara, Nowgong and Kamrup which have practically no tea industry have a far larger percentage under agriculture, 85.2, 85.4

and 80.4, respectively; therefore their percentage under non-agriculture is correspondingly lower 14.8, 14.6 and 19.6, respectively. The livelihood pattern of these three districts is markedly different from that of the remaining four tea districts. It is mainly tea which forces up the percentage of population under non-agriculture to 54.4 in Lakhimpur, 40.1 in Cachar and 35.5 in Sibsagar and correspondingly depressing their population under agriculture. From the point of view of agriculture Lakhimpur, the Dibrugarh subdivision of which is one vast tea garden, is the least important; it contains the remaining major industries of Assam, viz., Oil and Coal. No wonder if its agricultural population is only 54.6. Agricultural population in Cachar is only 59.9 per cent both due to tea industry and the presence of a large number of refugees numbering over a lakh who eke out a living by taking recourse to miscellaneous sources and petty services and trades. Against the State average of 57.9 and the Plains one of 54.8 per cent only, Nowgong shows 70.6 per cent of its people under Class I with Goalpara and Kamrup (63.6 and 63.1, respectively), closely competing for the second place. These are precisely three districts which had in the recent past vast areas of cultivable land awaiting settlement, which advantage was grabbed by the Muslim immigrants from East Bengal. Cachar with its present density of population, which is the highest in Assam, with all available cultivable land occupied long ago allowing little scope for immigration, has the lowest percentage under the class, namely, 42.2. In Livelihood Class II Darrang takes the palm, 22.6 against the Assam Plains average of 14.1. It shows that though under ryotwari settlement a process of sub-tenancy has increased apace there. Goalpara (17.7) or Lakhimpur (15.2) figures should not occasion any surprise. Goalpara is the only permanently settled district in the State, whereas Lakhimpur stands in a class by itself. Of its two subdivisions Dibrugarh is a vast tea garden while North Lakhimpur, with scope for further advance of cultivation and settlement, has an immense area under swamps and waste. The agricultural labourer class which in Assam is the lowest of all Part 'A' States of India is practically insignificant in Lakhimpur (0.5) and Sibsagar (0.9). Nowgong figure 2.8 is the highest under class III. Its immigrant population contains sufficient reserves

of man power both able and willing to serve the indigenous peasants as well as early immigrants for cultivating their land or tilling their surplus land. Livelihood Class IV, which is insignificant in Assam, is completely so in Lakhimpur which has much less than one tenth per cent of its people in this group. In the permanently settled districts of Goalpara and Cachar (Karimganj subdivision only) we will naturally find the largest percentage of people under this class, but here too the percentage is as low as 1.7 and 1.4 respectively. Under non-agriculture in the Assam Plains the most striking feature is that Lakhimpur shows 35.5 per cent of its population under Class V. The figure is astonishingly high for a rural State like Assam; its reasons we have already discussed. Lakhimpur is decidedly the most industrialised district in Assam. The relative percentage of people in this class in the districts of Assam Plains is largely determined by the number of people supported by their tea industry. Against the high watermark attained by Lakhimpur, the low level of Goalpara and Kamrup (4.5 and 4.8 respectively) does not create any occasion for explanation. One would naturally expect Cachar to return the highest percentage, viz., 5.6 under Commerce in view of its tea industry, the B.O.C. at Masimpur, the arrival of the refugees who take recourse to petty trades to eke out a livelihood and its comparatively better means of communications both by road and by inland waterways. The proportions of Kamrup and Goalpara under Commerce are what they are, due to the presence of refugees in their midst. District figures of livelihood class VII require little explanation. We should naturally expect Goalpara, which due to the presence of the Eastern Duars in its midst has the poorest means of communications in Assam Plains, to show the lowest percentage of population in this class (7.8) which is nearly 6 per cent lower than the average for this Natural Division. The three Plains districts which return by far the highest percentage of people included under this class are Cachar, Kamrup and Goalpara. There large numbers of refugees eke out a miserable existence by taking recourse to services and petty trades and commerce.

The livelihood pattern of Naga Tribal Area is simplicity itself. 97.6 per cent of its people belong to Livelihood Class I and the remaining 2.4 to Livelihood Class VIII, there being not a single individual returned under any



other livelihood class. This need not occasion any raising of eyebrows once its geographical, political and economic isolation and backwardness in the farthest corner of the Division is taken into consideration. Four out of five Autonomous Districts return over 90 per cent under Agriculture, headed by Garo Hills 95.0, Naga Hills 94.1, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills 94 and Lushai Hills 93. Their relative position under non-agriculture is exactly the reverse. The United Khasi and Jaintia Hills with the smallest percentage, *i.e.*, 67.7 under Agriculture tops the list under non-agriculture with 32.3. The plains areas of the N. E. F. A. can be dismissed in a sentence. As the census was confined only to the plain areas, a large fraction of the population of which is born in other districts, going there merely for purposes of trade, commerce, transport or services, the census figures show very high percentages under non-agriculture varying from 44.5 for Balipara Frontier Tract, 39.6 for Abor Hills, 34.3 for Mishmi Hills and 30.8 for Tirap Frontier Tract.

All the autonomous districts have an overwhelming majority of their population in Class I—no less than 89.7 in Garo Hills rising to 92.6 in Naga Hills. Only the United K. & J. Hills returns 50.5. This is due to its more diversified livelihood pattern as befitting the most advanced district in Assam Hills Division containing also the State Capital, within its borders. Livelihood Class II is of small significance in the autonomous districts. Lushai Hills is unique among all districts to show 'nil', with Naga Hills 0.8 per cent. Only in the United K. & J. Hills District, where the process of sub-tenancy is coming into vogue in view of the increasing pressure of population, the figure is as high as 8.9.

Class III or Agricultural Labourers are even more insignificant in all autonomous districts than Class II with the exception again of Shillong where it forms 8 per cent. Lushai Hills again shows an astonishingly low figure of 0.1 per cent. Totally insignificant as Class IV is everywhere in Assam Hills, where it shows one half per cent, it may safely be passed over in silence. Under Class V the United K. & J. Hills again enjoys primacy by returning 8 per cent of its population under this Class, all other districts showing roundabout 1 per cent. The N. E. F. A. Tracts excepting Mishmi Hills have a sizeable chunk of their population in this Class, nearly

20 per cent or so. The hills districts have little commerce mainly because they have even less transport. Commerce gives livelihood to 5 per cent in the United K. & J. Hills but Transport only 0.6 per cent. Livelihood Class VIII—Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources—attain some significance once again in the United K. & J. District where it supports nearly 20 per cent of the entire population against a percentage varying from 2 to 5 in other Autonomous Districts.

#### 95. Livelihood Pattern of Manipur :

The livelihood pattern of Manipur State resembles that of Assam Hills, with 83.4 per cent of its population depending on agriculture and the remaining 16.6 per cent depending on non-agriculture. 71.2 per cent of people are owner cultivators while 10 per cent are cultivating tenants. Agricultural labourers in Manipur are only 0.2 per cent while agricultural rent receivers constitute a further 2 per cent. Production other than Cultivation supports 7 per cent of the people, whereas Commerce does only 4.2 per cent. Transport maintains one-half percent of the total population against 4.9 maintained by Other Industries and Miscellaneous Sources.

#### 96. Livelihood Pattern of Tripura :

The livelihood pattern of Tripura State resembles more that of Assam Plains, with its 75.3 per cent depending on agriculture and 24.7 per cent on non-agriculture. Class I in Tripura constitutes 59.8 per cent against 8.7 for Class II, 4.8 for Class III and 1.9 for Class IV. Under non-agriculture the largest group is Class VIII, 11.8 per cent, followed by 6.4 of Class VI, 6.0 of Class V and 0.5 of Class VII. The following table 1.54 sums up the argument :—

TABLE 1.54.

#### *Livelihood Pattern of Manipur and Tripura*

State	Percentage of population belonging to livelihood Class.										
	Agriculture					Non-Agriculture					
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	I-IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	V-VIII.	
Manipur	71.2	10.0	0.2	2.0	83.4	7.0	4.2	0.5	4.9	16.6	
Tripura	59.8	8.8	4.8	1.9	75.3	6.0	6.4	0.5	11.8	24.7	

#### 96. Livelihood pattern at the past censuses :

Unfortunately it is not possible for me to compare the livelihood pattern of Assam and its natural divisions at the present census



with the same in the past decades. This is due to the partition of Sylhet on account of which Assam has lost nearly 1/3rd of its present population. As Sylhet was not a particularly important district from the point of view of tea, the livelihood pattern at the previous censuses of Assam minus the population of Sylhet now transferred to Pakistan will definitely present a picture different from the one shown by Assam which includes Sylhet. Hence I have to content myself with merely describing the trends revealed by the present census without being able to compare the same with the past.

#### 97. Livelihood pattern of Immigrants :

As the tabulation in the present census is based on the economic classification of

the entire population, we are in a position to discuss separately the livelihood pattern of immigrants born in other States of Indian Union but enumerated in Assam for which separate figures are available. These figures are given in Subsidiary Table 8.1 in Part I-B of this Report, which enables us to know exactly what livelihoods attract immigrants to Assam. The following Table 1.55 summarises the figures broadly for agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods for the adjacent States of Manipur, Tripura and West Bengal and some non-adjacent States, e.g., Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madras. Other States which are not so important are lumped together in column 13.

TABLE 1.55

*Livelihood Pattern of Immigrants born in other States of India and enumerated in Assam*  
No. per 10,000 immigrants

Livelihood Class	Total for all States	NUMBER PER 10,000 IMMIGRANTS BORN IN										
		Manipur	Tripura	West Bengal	Orissa	Bihar	Uttar Pradesh	Madhya Bharat	Rajasthan	Madras	Madhya Pradesh	Other States
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Agricultural Classes :	1,608	4,665	3,096	5,099	992	1,626	1,163	1,947	861	549	2,117	535
Non-Agricultural Classes :	8,392	5,335	6,904	5,901	9,008	8,374	8,837	8,053	9,139	9,451	7,883	9,465

Only 16 per cent of the immigrants have an agricultural means of livelihood while 84 per cent depend on non-agricultural sources. Thus it is clear that so far as the immigrants from India as a whole into Assam are concerned, it is not land or agriculture that attracts them but the non-agricultural livelihoods. This is particularly so in the case of the non-adjacent States, each of which has at least 80 per cent. of its inhabitants in Assam returned under non-agricultural livelihoods. We have already seen that the non-adjacent States are precisely those from which a large number of tea garden labourers have come. It is for this reason that 61 per cent. of all the immigrants return Livelihood Class V, which in the case of Assam means mainly tea and little else. The percentage in the case of Orissa is as high as 86, closely followed by Madras (84), Madhya Pradesh (74) and Madhya Bharat (73). In the case of immigrants from Uttar Pradesh,

however, Livelihood Class VIII is only slightly less significant than Livelihood Class V whereas in the case of immigrants from Rajasthan, Livelihood Class VI (40%) is of greater importance than Livelihood Class V (34%). We have already seen how men of Rajasthan especially the Marwaris mostly take to commerce and petty trades, which these figures illustrate.

#### 98. Livelihood pattern of displaced persons :

This is the right place to discuss the Livelihood pattern of the displaced persons as well, for which separate figures are available. In view, however, of the burning nature of the problem of the refugees and its importance to the body politic as well as to the economic structure of Assam, I have written a separate chapter on displaced persons which will also deal with the livelihood pattern of this entirely new migration stream into Assam (Chapter VIII—paragraph 478 may be referred to here).

## SECTION VII

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

We may now summarise the discussions of the previous sections and make an attempt to forecast the future trends of the population growth in Assam in the light of our study.

99. **Density :**

An examination of the general distribution of the population and density shows that the crude density of Assam (176 persons per sq. mile of the censused area) is lower than that of any other Part A State of India, excepting Madhya Pradesh (163). The density of Assam Hills is as low as 44 while that of Assam Plains is 339 persons per sq. mile. The low density of Assam Hills as well as of the State as a whole is, however, due entirely to the nature of the hilly terrain and abundance of rivers, marshy tracts and vast areas of forests. For a purely agricultural region like Assam Plains, its density of 339 persons per sq. miles is definitely on the high side and shows pressure of population on the soil even in this far-off State of India. All available lands are already being occupied by the natural growth of indigenous population as well as by the immense numbers of immigrants that have poured into Assam in the last half century, and are pouring in even to-day. The vast areas of waste, rivers, forests and hills in Assam will ever prevent it from competing in point of density with some important Part A States of India like Bihar (572) Uttar Pradesh (557), not to talk of West Bengal (806). In the context of the wider world Assam here compares with the great neighbour of India, viz., China (123) and with Indonesia (108) and is not far behind "all other European countries" (135), (Subsidiary Table 1.11).

100. **Growth of Population :**

For India as a whole as well as many of its Part A States, 1921 was a Great Divide. Upto 1921 the growth of population in these areas was sporadic in some decades, almost declining in others; but after 1921, it has been continuous and phenomenal. The Mean Decennial Growth Rate of India for the five decades of the present century beginning from 1901-10 was *plus* 5.6, *minus* 0.4, *plus* 10.5, *plus* 13.3 and

*plus* 12.5 (Subsidiary Table 1.13). In Assam, the position has been entirely different. Though the total growth during the last two decades exceeds the combined increase of the first three decades of the century, the Mean decennial Growth Rate in Assam has never fallen below 17 per cent excepting the very first decade when it was as much as 16 per cent. From 3,814,188 in 1901, the population of Assam has now increased to 9,043,707, an increase of 137 per cent in 50 years, i.e., 2.7 per cent per annum, which is among the highest rates registered by any State in India in this period. The demographic history of Assam in the last 50 years is one of tremendously accelerated growth. The growth has been at a lower rate in the Hills Division than in the Plains.

101. **Factors affecting growth :**

Among the factors bringing about this great growth of population, migration has played a vitally important part. The net balance of migration during 1921-30 was as high as 517 thousand, whereas for the period 1931-50, it reached 879 thousand. The picture will not be very different even if we know the unknown factors of emigration to Nepal and Pakistan, which are by all odds of very small moment. Compared with the vast volume of immigration, emigration in all these decades is practically insignificant.

Natural increase plays a secondary part in accounting for the growth of population. Since 1921, the recorded death rate has been declining steadily and consistently, registering the present all time low rate of 11.7 during 1941-50. The recorded birth rate has also come down from 27.4 in 1921-30 to 17.2 in 1941-50 due to improvement in medical facilities and the changes in the age structure brought about by the influenza epidemic of 1918-19. The grossly inaccurate registration of vital statistics in Assam Plains and their complete absence in the Assam Hills make it very difficult to make any confident generalisation based on figures of vital statistics.

### 102. Future trends for 1951-60 :

The future trends in Assam are bound to be in the direction of accelerated population growth. The rise in age of marriage, of girls due both to economic and social causes is to be measured against the progressive fall in the proportion of widows, as society advances more and more in the direction of social equality and progress. Both due to poverty and ignorance of the masses and opposition from influential strata of society, there is little likelihood of birth control measures becoming universal or general. Hence, on the whole, there are no prospects of a substantial fall in the actual birth rate. Of course, one must bear in mind the progressive character of our population, and its potentialities for huge increments. The only thing that one can be certain of is the fall in mortality consequent on better control of epidemics and diseases, improvement in public health and medical facilities, the discovery of new drugs and the ever improving ante-natal, mid-wifery and post-natal care of mothers and children. Immigration will continue to play an important role in the growth of population unless political conditions in East Pakistan are vastly better than what we have been accustomed to experience, compelling thousands of helpless Hindus to take refuge in Assam. In spite of constitutional and legal barriers, the hardy Muslim immigrants from Mymensingh and other districts of East Bengal are still likely to come in and get imperceptibly and without much ado absorbed in Assam's population. The tea industry will continue to make demands on the distant states of India for labour though at a diminishing rate, as it comes to depend more and more on the "home-grown labour". The migratory currents to and from Nepal too are likely to remain more or less the same as observed in the last three censuses. Hence we can confidently look forward to another large increment in Assam's population in the coming decade.

### 103. Need for Family Planning :

The vast increase in the population and the pressure that exists on the limited resources of the State brings to the forefront the urgency of the problems of economic development, family planning and population control as well as control over immigration. The population problem is countrywide and some students of Indian demography have been greatly alarmed

by the tremendous rate of population growth, for India is apparently adding the population of a Spain or a Poland or an England every decade. This vast increase is taking place against a background of economic development that is only partial and limited when judged in terms of the country's needs and potentialities. Industrialisation and the use of modern techniques have affected only limited segments of our national economy. Agriculture is still the mainstay of life for about 70 per cent of the population and the productivity in this sector is exceedingly low. The size of agricultural holdings has progressively diminished; the old cottage and small-scale industries have been decaying and the rural population which constitutes about 83 per cent of the total in India suffers from chronic under-employment and low incomes. Population has increased by more than 50 per cent in India in the last 50 years, but the growth of alternative occupations either in the rural areas or in the town has not been on a scale which could absorb this growing population. As the Planning Commission remarks, "For the community as a whole, the economic development of the last few decades has brought no significant improvement in standards of living and opportunities for employment, and has perhaps accentuated to some extent inequalities of income and wealth."\*

It is true that a growing population increases the man power potentialities of the country and also has the effect, in some ways, of stimulating investment. It is also true that the effect of an increase in population cannot be judged solely in terms of the effect on *per capita* incomes; it affects the whole pattern of production and consumption. It is not possible to judge whether, or not, an increasing population is favourable or otherwise to development. But in the short run, "there is no doubt that, given a situation in which shortage of capital equipment rather than of labour is the main limiting factor in development, a rapidly growing population is apt to become more a source of embarrassment than of help to a programme for raising standards of living. In other words, the higher rate of increase of population, the larger is likely to be the effort needed to raise *per capita* living standards."† Dr. S. Chandrasekhar states the same fact more bluntly when

\* The First Five Year Plan—p. 12.

† The First Five Year Plan—p. 18.

he remarks, "It must be confessed that the growth of population is dragging the present admittedly low standard of living steadily downward."\* Of course, the terms high and low standards of life or the demand for raising the standard of living must not be misunderstood. As rightly pointed out by Shri J. C. Kumarappa, "In a country like ours, where people live on the margin of subsistence, any such raising of the standard of living must refer to the satisfaction of the primary needs and the provision of bare necessities of life, not the acquisition of new habits. The term "high standard of living" need not connote a life led with a desire to satisfy a multiplicity of wants and desires, nor need it have any reference to the qualitative aspect of life. It refers primarily to the quantitative conditions of one's existence. Therefore, the more accurate way of describing this position would be to talk of a "complex life" and a "simple life" rather than a "high" and a "low" standard. Simply because a British Tommy requires a hundred and one things for his apparel, food, drinks, smokes, etc., it does not mean his standard of living is "high" as compared to the life of, say, a person like Gandhiji. We may say that Gandhiji's is a "high" standard of living while referring to the quality of life he leads and a "simple" life referring to his material wants; while that of a British Tommy would be a "low" standard of life qualitatively and a "complex" standard quantitatively."†

The imperative need for birth control and family planning should be clear from what has been stated above. Unless steps are taken deliberately to reduce the birth rate, the upward trend of population will continue, since improvement in medical facilities and better control of epidemics together with the measures taken to provide a certain minimum of food for the poorer sections of the community should help to lower the death rate further.

While a lowering of the birth-rate may occur as a result of improvements in the standards of living, such improvements themselves are not likely to materialise if there is concurrently a vast increase of population. The realisation of these facts has led the Planning Commission to

observe, "It is, therefore, apparent that population control can be achieved only by the reduction of the birth-rate to the extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with the requirements of national economy. This can be secured only by the realisation of the need for family limitation on a wide scale by the people. The main appeal for family planning is based on considerations of the health and welfare of the family. Family limitation or spacing of the children is necessary and desirable in order to secure better health for the mother and better care and upbringing of children. Measures directed to this end should, therefore, form part of the public health programme."\* This view falls in line with the earlier opinion expressed by the Planning Committee set up by Nethaji Subash Chandra Bose, when he was the President of the Indian National Congress. "In the interest of social economy, family happiness and national planning, family planning and limitation of children are essential and the State should adopt a policy to encourage these. It is desirable to lay stress as well as to spread knowledge on cheap and safe methods of birth control. Birth control clinics should be established and other necessary measures taken in this behalf and to prevent the advertisement of harmful methods."

It would be of interest to mention here that even in Western countries fertility responded much less quickly to modernisation, as pointed out by Notestein. "The reasons why fertility failed to decline with mortality are clear enough in general terms..... (Societies) having to face the heavy mortality characteristic of the pre-modern era, must have high fertility to survive. Their religious doctrines, moral codes, laws, education, community customs, marriage habits and family organisations are all focussed towards maintaining high fertility. These change only gradually and in response to the strongest stimulation."†

The circumstances under which the revolutionary change towards limited families was brought about in the Western countries are described by the Royal Commission on population

\* The First Five Year Plan—p. 522.

\* Dr. S. Chandrasekhar—India's Population—Fact and Policy—p. 6.

† Dr. J. C. Kumarappa—"The Gandhian Economy and Other Essays."

† Notestein Frank W. "Population—The Long view" quoted in the United Nations Economic and Social Council Studies on Relationship between Population trends and Economic and Social Factors, Paragraph 318 (E/CN. 955).

in Great Britain. They include, "the decay of small scale family handicrafts—and the rise of large scale industry and factory organisation; the loss of security and growth of competitive individualism, the relative decline in agriculture and rise in importance of industry and commerce, and the associated shift of population from rural to urban areas; the growing prestige of science which disturbed traditional religious beliefs the development of popular education : high standards of living : the growth of humanitarianism, and the emancipation of women. All these and other changes are closely inter-related; they present a complex of web, rather than a chain of cause and effect; and it would be extremely difficult to trace how they acted and reacted on each other or to assess their relative importance." \* These economic, social and cultural forces which are gradually making themselves felt in our country will take time to gather momentum. While considering the question of the fall in the average family size in Great Britain the Royal Commission† further observes, "The process, however, which has been slow in the recent past, does not seem likely to be any faster in future. Indeed it may well be slower. The minority who do not control the size of their families include many persons who have objections to birth control on religious grounds. It also includes considerable numbers who are in some degree subnormal in intelligence, foresight or sense of responsibility, and who, therefore, are not readily susceptible to the ordinary consideration, that make for control of family size." While it is the minority in Britain which does not control the size of the family, it is by far the large majority in our country which does not do so. Not perhaps due to any real conscious objection, except in the case of a few, but for want of adequate facilities and lack of knowledge on the subject and failure to appreciate the urgency of the problem. Industrialisation in Assam has been of such a small dimension that we need not ponder here to consider its effect on the future birth rate.

The recognition of this need for family planning should not blind us to the difficulty of converting the masses of India to support a movement of birth control. Their modes and institutions of individual and social life as well as their social and re-

ligious values will continue to have a decisive influence both on the numbers and composition of the people. Another serious difficulty is that of suggesting a suitable contraceptive which will be acceptable to the masses and which can be made cheap enough to be brought within their means. In a state like Assam, not only many doctors know little about the scientific side of birth control but an overwhelming majority of our villages are practically without doctors and dispensaries. In the light of these factors, the success of family planning in Assam as well as India can only be very slow and gradual.

To advocate family planning is not necessarily to imply that in India as well as in other countries of Asia, the struggle against appalling poverty and short span of life will be futile as long as people do not learn to restrain their fecundity. Such reproaches and admonitions imply that the Western nations, especially the people in the United States of America, have actually restricted their birth rate by some sort of policy and with the intention of improving food situation or the economic situation in general. Neither implication is tenable, as pointed out by Dr. Karl Brandt, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Food Research Institute, Stanford University, and a consultant on various problems relating to food and agriculture to the Government of the United States of America, in his *Reconstruction of World Agriculture*: "In the western countries birth rates have declined as a secondary result of industrialization and urbanization, and the change in economic and social standards which accompanied the process. And even in Europe it has taken from two to three generations for the decline in birth rate to become marked."\*

As the same authority observes that popular modern ideas of relieving population pressure by means of social missionaries preaching the gospel of birth control and spreading knowledge about contraceptive techniques naively miscalculate the power of the basic biological dynamics in the life of nations. The only realistic approach to the solution of the population problem in Asia is to be sought in the direction of economic progress. In the United States the economically most backward regions of the deep

\* Report of Royal Commission on Population, p. 38.

† Ibid, p. 76.

\* Dr. Karl Brandt: "Reconstruction of World Agriculture", p. 333.

South still have the same or similar population characteristics among the poor whites and Negroes that prevail in Asia. Only as economic progress penetrates into the backwoods will high birth rates decline. It may take generations for an advancement in the agricultural and industrial economy of Asia to result in a greater margin of food consumption by individuals.\*

#### 103A. Need for controlling immigration :

As we have already seen, immigration is by far the most important factor responsible for the tremendous growth of Assam's population in the last decade. We have distinguished 4 main migration streams, viz.

- (1) East Bengal Muslim immigrants,
- (2) Hindu refugees from Pakistan,
- (3) tea garden labour immigration, and
- (4) the Nepalis.

If the people of Assam are to enjoy the gifts of nature in their own State, the Government of Assam will have to seriously consider about controlling immigration. On purely humanitarian grounds, as a natural corollary of the partition of the sub-continent, there are not likely to be any restrictions on the arrival of the Hindu refugees from Pakistan. People would not leave their ancestral hearths and homes except under the weight of sheer and compelling necessity, for the security of their life and property and the honour of their womenfolk. Again under the new constitution which guarantees freedom of movement to all Indian citizens, who can settle anywhere in India, it may not be possible to restrict immigration from other States of India. Such immigration, however, is confined mostly to supply the needs of the tea industry. This is already a decreasing stream because, as we have already seen, the tea industry now largely depends on 'home-grown' labour. This will automatically bring about a reduction in the number of tea garden labour immigration into Assam. Actually we are witnessing the phenomenon of surplus labour in many gardens and steps are being taken to divert them to gardens which suffer from a scarcity of labour. The setting up of the two independent countries of India and Pakistan has already created a social climate in which the immigration of East Bengal Muslims into Assam should be less than before. However, the pressure of

population on soil in East Bengal is so tremendous that the hardy Mymensinghians and others from neighbouring districts will still try to come to Assam in order to be better off than in their newly-born State. The Governments of Assam as well as India will have to take adequate measures to stop this before it is too late. There will have to be some check on the Nepalese immigration also atleast to prevent damage to the countryside by indiscriminate cutting down of forests and to allow for a planned utilisation of the vast grazing reserves of Darrang, Kamrup, Lakhimpur and the hills, districts for the needs of the indigenous population.

#### 104. Need for Economic Development and Progress :

This compels us to give as great an emphasis as possible to the other aspect of population problem, viz., that of economic development and progress, which is never known to have failed in its effect on population growth. Whatever we may do now to change the population habits of the people by advocating and popularising family planning, for a very long time to come, the established trends and principles as well as the age structure of the population, coupled with the vast migration streams into Assam are bound to give rise to a large and ever increasing population. Moreover, the basic urge to a rationalisation of population habits and family patterns is to be found in a higher standard of life. Therefore, as pointed out by Principal D. G. Karve, both as an immediate solution for short-term problem and as the best preparation of ground for the mastering of long-term evils, concentration on a positive programme of economic development is indicated. The Famine Inquiry Commission of 1945, rightly observes\*, "while we hold that there is a serious population situation, we emphasise throughout that the primary problem is that of underdevelopment of resources, both agricultural and industrial, in a wide sense of the term." This implies that the problem is that of under-development of all sides. The battle has to be waged on all fronts not merely economic, but social, educational, moral, cultural and religious. On the economic front special emphasis will have to be placed on increased industrialisation and urbanisation.

\* Ibid, p. 333.

\* The Famine Inquiry Commission : Final Report, p. 73.



F. W. Nottestein,\* in his report on the population of Europe and the Soviet Union prepared by the Population Research Section of the Princeton University says, "Few social trends in the modern period have been as universal and persistent as the decline of mortality and fertility. Coming as a result of agricultural, industrial and technical evolution, the decline was established first in mortality, and only after a considerable interval in fertility. The result of this lagging transition from high to low vital rates has been a wave of population growth, moving across Europe with the current of modernisation."

The stimulus of a higher standard of life for the individual everywhere in Western Europe and America has been seen to produce more assured effect of lowering fertility than the terrors of poverty emphasised by the earlier economics. The influence of modern industrialisation on fertility is not merely mechanical or biological but operates through social and psychological channels. As the same writers† explain, "The emergence of the small family pattern is in major part due to the voluntary control of fertility, principally through contraception. The driving force stimulating such control lies in the social-economic incentives. Modern urban society places a high value on the individual as opposed to the family or other groups, sets great store by the advancement of the individual in health, education, social and economic status, and makes child-bearing an expensive undertaking. The simple fact is that it places heavy economic and social penalties on the parents of large families. There are strong inducements to parents to have only a few children to whom they can give every advantage."

Principal D. G. Karve‡ pertinently observes, 'Those who fell pessimistic or hesitant about economic progress on the score of continued increase in population will do well to ponder over this extensive, almost universal, experience of the West. Propaganda in favour of birth control and of particular methods of practising it has its

own merits on which doctors alone can pronounce an opinion. But it is an incontrovertible fact of historical experience that such propaganda has succeeded only with reference to sections of population which were well-to-do and enlightened. While knowledge of the means of contraception has been freely available in all western countries during the last century the lowering of fertility in the several countries has synchronised only with advanced stages of industrialisation. Even now in respect of age at marriage, time interval between marriage and birth of first child and the size of the family, the lower income groups in countries with low average fertility show lesser response to contraceptive propaganda than the better-to-do. While it will be noticed from the extracts given above that there is no hard and fast time schedule between the working out of the Industrial Revolution and the commencement of the period of lowering fertility, the advanced stages of the former have definitely a favourable influence on institutions and practices making for a slower rise of population and eventually for a stable population. For those concerned over population as also for those concerned over poverty the immediate task is the same: namely, an industrial and scientific transformation of the whole economy." He goes on to say, "For a proper perspective on the population question we need not depend only on western experience. Japan, which among eastern countries was the first to modernise its economy has experienced the same effect on its population trends." Commenting on the marked fall in net birth rates and reproduction rates in Japan since 1920, Irene B. Taeuber and Frank W. Notestein say in an article in the first issue of *Population Studies*: "Decline in fertility would seem to be an inevitable consequence of the pressures and the stimuli of an industrialising and urbanising economy, whether the underlying culture be Western or Eastern. In Japan traditional values, oligarchic government, state education, state religion, militarism and a carefully fostered feudalism in agriculture all operated to maintain peasant psychology intact and to avoid the disturbing social and psychological changes of the new economy while achieving its material advantages. Yet the broad outlines of the historical decline in fertility in Japan which have been summarised here might have been written of any country in the west. There are differences but there are also differences in the demographic history of England and

\* The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union: By Frank W. Notestein & Others. League of Nations, 1944; p. 16.

† The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union: By Frank W. Notestein and Others. League of Nations, 1944, p. 30.

‡ D. G. Karve—Economic Handbooks—Indian Population, p. 45-46.



France, or Germany and Poland, of Roumania and Bulgaria."\* Unless, therefore, we turn our back on science and industry we can confidently expect our people to react to the new stimuli in the same manner as people of both the eastern and western countries in similar circumstances have done. Our traditional ideas, our social institutions, the peculiarities of our industrialisation—all these will doubtless influence the pace and the extent of the new development. But it is certain that the prospect of a better standard of life, the feeling of self-reliance, and the recognition of the need to adjust oneself to new environment will work in the desired direction."†

#### 105. Different Population Theories :

This is not the place to go into the details of the theories of population, the Malthusian and neo-Malthusian dogmas and laws, e.g., optimum theory of population or the theory of net reproduction rate. As Wadia and Merchant‡ rightly point out, "population theories change with the spirit of the times, and are largely determined by the environmental conditions under which they are formulated." The Malthusian theory in terms of numbers and subsistence is even now of practical interest to many Asian countries, including ours; but the optimum theory is a speculative figment of the mind without much connection with this world; it does not give any guiding rule for the practical and political judgement of reality". Theoretically it may be admitted that there is an optimum population for any country at any given time which, in view of the total economic resources of the country, can enable the population to enjoy the highest possible standard of living even when this optimum is taken not as a fixed value as it naturally varies according to the extent of the resources. Even if it is taken as a curve rather than as a figure, it is of little practical use for guidance in population policies and problems.

There are various methods whereby the statisticians of different countries have calculated the probable development of population in the future. Net reproduction rates are now generally considered to be the only reliable measures of the trend of the natural movement of population. These rates are calculated on the basis of fertility and mortality, with the elimination of cer-

tain factors, such as those resulting from the difference in the age structure\* of the populations that are being compared. All that these rates claim to show is the results that would be reached if the present fertility and mortality of the population remained constant. The method adopted for this purpose by R. R. Kuczynski is to calculate the probable number of female children per 1,000 women during their child-bearing period (from 15 to 49 years) and to correct the result by means of mortality tables. A net rate of 1,000 for 1,000 (—1) is just sufficient to maintain the population in the long run at its present level. Any difference either way indicates a tendency towards an increase or decrease in population as the case may be.

Unfortunately fertility data have never been compiled for Assam at any of its Censuses, past or present. Hence I am not in a position to calculate the net reproduction rate for Assam. Regarding India, however, at this Census, we are in a more fortunate position because some of the State Governments did utilise the optional question in the Census Schedule to calculate fertility for their own areas, e.g., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Travancore-Cochin. Once these data are available, they are likely to throw a flood of light not merely on the fertility patterns of various classes of Indian population at different age periods but also enable us to calculate for at least these areas the net reproduction rate. Till such time as these data are available, all students of Indian demography will have to bear in mind and ponder over the general conclusion at which the Woodhead Famine Inquiry Commission of 1945† arrived. "In relation to the existing stage of development of her industrial and agricultural resources, India is, in our opinion overpopulated. Pressure of population, which of course varies in intensity in different parts of the country, is shown and felt in various ways by the general trend of food imports and exports India having within a generation become an importing rather than an exporting country; by the decrease in the size of holdings, the fragmentation of holdings, and the increase in the number of landless labourers, all related to the fact that the total areas under cultivation have not increased as rapidly as the population, so that the per capita area has decreased; by the continuing poverty of the mass of the people

\* Population studies, June, 1947, p. 28.

† D. G. Karve, Indian Population, p. 46.

‡ P. A. Wadia and Merchant—"Our Economic Problem"—p. 49.

\* "Population—A Problem for Democracy", Myrda

† The Famine Inquiry Commission: Final Report (1945); p. 90.

and by the widespread existence of mal and under nutrition, inspite of growth in total industrial and agricultural resources and in the total wealth of the country".

#### 106. Economically desirable population :

Discussing the problem of economic production and growth of population Kingsley Davis remarks, 'Numerous writers have pointed out that if economic production can advance faster than population can grow, over population need not occur. This is absolutely true. But the conclusion that we can concentrate on economic development and ignore population does not follow in the least. Since the two variables in question affect each other, economic production cannot permanently be advanced in the face of an ever-increasing population. There must come a point when further population increase in a finite world will bring curtailment of per capita production. Quite apart, then from the feasibility of economic reforms in a given country, there is the additional consideration that any kind of economic system has its optimum population, beyond which numbers cannot rise without penalty.'\*

The chief considerations relevant to the trend of population economically desirable are summarised by Britain's Royal Commission on Population as follows :—

#### "Disadvantages of Growing Numbers :

- (1) The amount of land available per head of the population diminishes as numbers in any country increase;
- (2) The growing numbers have to be supplied with capital equipment of every sort (house room, public utilities, industrial plant, etc.) and productive resources have to be devoted to this purpose which might otherwise be used to raise standards.

#### Counterbalancing Advantages :

On the other hand increasing numbers—

- (1) facilitate an increase in the scale of production and supply stimulus to technical improvement;
- (2) if due to high birth rate, are associated with a low average age of the population;
- (3) make the economic system more flexible and may thus make it easier to avoid waste of productive resources through obstinate mass unemployment.

- (4) tend to increase Nation's international influence and so in various ways to strengthen its economic position.

The practical importance attaching to these different considerations depend on the surrounding circumstances and may vary greatly from one country to another, and from one period to another. This is specially true of the first main disadvantage of increasing numbers, viz., the decline in the amount of land available per head of population. In some circumstances, as in those of many Oriental and West Indian Communities, this disadvantage may be so great, after the population has reached a certain density as to be decisive by itself.\*\*

Our Planning Commission while considering the implications of a rapidly increasing population of India and its weakening effects on the economy of the Nation, clearly indicate their approach to the problem in the following words:— "In planning for a progressive improvement in living standards, the implications of this rapid growth of population need carefully to be considered. While it may be difficult to say what the optimum level of population for India should be and while it would also be wrong to underrate the potentialities of modern science and techniques to augment the productive capacity of the country, it is clear that, **under present conditions, an increase in manpower "resources" does not strengthen the economy but, in fact, weakens it.** The population problem is complex and it has several aspects, economic and social. It is necessary in the present context only to stress the fact that unless measures are initiated at this stage to bring down the birth-rate and thereby to reduce the rate of population growth, a continuously increasing amount of effort on the part of the community will be used up only in maintaining existing standards of consumption. With all effort that the First Five Year Plan will represent, it will be possible to barely restore by 1955-56 the pre-war standards of consumption in regard to essentials like food and clothing. Increasing pressure of population on natural resources (which must inevitably be limited) retards economic progress and limits seriously the rate of extension of social services, so essential to civilised existence. A population policy is, therefore, essential to planning."†

\* The Population of Indian and Pakistan by Kingsley Davis, 1951, p. 205.

\* Report of the Royal Commission on Population, p. 101-102.

† The First Five Year Plan—A Draft Outline—p. 16

## CHAPTER II

# RURAL POPULATION

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 107 Utility of rural and urban statistics :

Census statistics of the rural and urban population have a variety of uses. They are of considerable help in studying the economic conditions, social and political changes, and demographic trends as indicated by rates of population, age structure, size and composition of the economically active population and the like. Their utility in comparing the conditions and characteristics of urban and rural people in the matter of births, deaths, sex composition, sanitation, standards of living, etc., for economic planning and development of social welfare work can hardly be over-stressed.

Discussing the contrast between the rural and urban life and the necessity of separate classification, S. Chandrasekhar remarks, "Rural life and urban life present sharp contrast all over the world and the contrast is perhaps sharpest in India. A rural population is predominantly agricultural in its occupation, has a low density per square mile and enjoys a high social and cultural stability arising out of cultural and ethnic continuity and homogeneity. All the traditional modes of culture are strongly preserved in a rural society, promoting conservatism which offers the most resistance to reform and innovation. For

these reasons detailed classification of the population on the basis of residential characteristics becomes necessary in any demographic analysis." \*

#### 108. Definition of "Rural" and "Urban" areas :

The definition of "rural" and "urban" areas present a real difficulty as is pointed out in the United Nations Demographic Year Book. "One of the most difficult problems in presenting internationally comparable demographic data is that involved in obtaining urban and rural classification of the population. The designation of areas as urban or rural is so closely bound up with historical, political, cultural and administrative considerations that the process of developing uniform definitions and procedures moves very slowly." A convenient way of presenting rural and urban statistics for comparison purposes is, therefore, to show the distribution of population in clusters or agglomerations, classified by the size of the agglomerations.

It is common to classify the population of a country into urban and rural for purposes of

\* S. Chandrasekhar "India's Population—Facts and Policy, p. 45 (Indian Institute for population Studies).

discussion in census reports, the underlying idea being to separate the people living in villages who lead a more individualistic life based on agriculture from those living in towns leading a more corporate life depending on non-agriculture, (i.e., Industry, Trade, Commerce, Services, Professions and Miscellaneous sources). All over the world towns as a rule enjoy far greater civic amenities, e.g., water, light, transport, roads, sports, recreation and clubs, educational and medical facilities than ever fall to the lot of the villages.

Naturally in a town there will be many persons to provide these urban amenities, and in the process, secure a comfortable livelihood for themselves. Hence we generally notice in towns a higher proportion of non-agricultural classes than the agricultural. Another factor which differentiates an urban area from the rural is the functioning of some form of civic administration, e.g., a Municipality, small-town committee, notified area committee or cantonment, or the existence in their midst of a big corporate institution or industry, e.g., railway or another large-scale industry like steel at Tatanagar. If the preponderance of non-agricultural classes and the enjoyment of reasonable civic amenities as detailed above are accepted as necessary criteria for distinguishing urban areas from the rural, one can easily eliminate what are merely outgrown villages, having nothing to show except mere numbers for their classification as towns.

A striking example of a large congregation of people in rural area in the post-partition Assam was the village of Baniachong in the Habiganj sub-division of Sylhet. This village at one time attained considerable notoriety all over Assam and outside for the terrible malaria epidemic, which during 1944-45 caused tens of thousands of deaths in this village. Its population then was nearly 60,000. During my brief tenure of office as Sub-Divisional Officer, Habiganj, I had several occasions to visit the village and to marvel how a rural area can have a population as large as 60,000 and yet remain a village. But a village it was and is today, without even rudimentary municipal administration, not even a small town committee, and no civic amenities worth the name. Yet it is one continuous separate village, clearly defined from the rest, with its population consisting mainly of

agriculturists and fishermen. In this case the arbitrary census definition of treating every agglomeration of population exceeding 5,000 as a town definitely breaks down. The same applies to the treatment of Imphal at the present census.

Such examples do not detract from the utility and importance of the rural-urban classification which is of great significance in demographic studies. The growth of population is vitally affected by the physical environment in which the population lives, the means of livelihood available in the different areas, the provision and availability of civic amenities like municipal markets and transport, education, health, recreation and dependance or otherwise on industry, trade, commerce, services and miscellaneous sources as occupation as against agriculture which is the mainstay of the villages the world over. In respect of all these matters and the census statistics derived therefrom, there is a significant difference between rural and urban areas. It is the existence of these conditions or their lack that should really determine the demarcation of local areas into villages and towns and not so much an absolute limit of population, viz., 5,000 and above. However, it must be said that though the definition is arbitrary, very rarely one comes across a place with a smaller population which really deserves to be treated as a town.

The first of all operations of the 1951 Census was to prepare or revise the general list of villages in every district. In the districts where there has been a cadastral survey, viz., Cachar and the five upper districts of the Assam Valley, the cadastral village was treated as a village for the purpose of the census. Elsewhere in the Plains where there has been no cadastral survey, the definition was—"A goan or gram together with its adjoining *tolas*, *paras*, etc., provided that none of these dependent collections of houses are so large or so distinct from the central village as to form by themselves true villages with distinct individual names". In hills districts, the most convenient definition of a village was generally found to be a collection of houses bearing a separate name. Instructions were also issued to treat all tea gardens separately from the villages. Any area devoted to tea cultivation is treated as a tea garden whether it maintains or not resident labour force or a factory, if it is registered as such by the tea licensing committee or is borne on the Deputy

Commissioner's register of tea gardens. The tea garden also includes lands settled for purposes ancillary to tea cultivation. If a portion of an ordinary cadastral village is settled with a tea garden for tea cultivation or purposes ancillary to it, it is separated from the cadastral village and included in the tea garden in forming charges, circles, etc.

The General Village Register of 1951, when written up was thoroughly checked with the printed village statements of 1941 and other available lists of villages, *e.g.*, chowkidari assessment list. When the register for any thana was complete it was sent to the Circle or Settlement Officer concerned to check the list of villages; when received back, the District or Sub-Divisional Census Officer examined it with particular care with reference to the boundaries of police stations to see that no area was omitted or accounted for twice over. It was also ordered to compare this list with the electoral house lists to find out if any newly-formed village was duly included therein. These instructions were carefully carried out in all districts; this made doubly sure the inclusion of all old or new villages in the census without any omission whatsoever.

Though these instructions are sound and useful for the census purposes, one peculiar consequence resulting from them must be clearly borne in mind. **The villages of Assam are not true villages as ordinarily understood.** A cadastral village, the unit of the revenue survey is locally a very well known unit; it has been surveyed and mapped and the ordinary villager understands it well. It is, however, by no means a village in the ordinary sense of the word; it merely happens to be the most convenient unit on which to base the frame work of the census. Thus the number of villages in Goalpara has increased from 3,765 in 1941 to 4,148 in 1951 whereas it has decreased in Kamrup from 2,865 to 2,789 though its population has increased by 17.9 per cent. The number of villages in Nowgong and Sibsagar show a slight decrease due to the reduction of the Mikir Hills areas. Any close analysis of the 'village' statistics in the plains districts is, therefore, not of much use. Such increases or decreases are due to the personal equation of the local officers in calling more hamlets villages at one time and reducing villages to hamlets at

another. Villages in the hills are generally residential villages and correspond with the revenue or tax paying villages. Our statistics show that with the increase of population in all hills districts the villages have also increased in number. Naga Hills, however, show an identical number of villages as in 1941 showing that it is not possible to have more villages in this district on account of the heavy pressure of population. In the Mikir Hills, the jurisdiction of a gaonbura was counted as a village whereas in the Garo Hills it was a Nokma's jurisdiction.

Thus in Assam, villages and residential units only in the hills correspond generally to what would be called a village in any other part of the world.

The urban population and its problems are discussed in Chapter III; it may be mentioned here in passing that all places with a population of 5,000 and above are called towns. The definition of a town is rather elastic and some places with a lesser number have been treated as towns if they have Municipal Institutions or some administrative or political significance, *e.g.*, Hailong, Kohima, Mongaldoi, Palasbari, Nalbari, Nazira, Doom Dooma, North Lakhimpur and Shillong cantonment. Imphal in Manipur State too has been treated as a town merely due to political reasons. On the other hand, as we shall see later, some areas with a population of more than 5,000 have still been treated as villages, *e.g.*, Digboi, Pandu.

#### 109. Villages in ancient India\* :

Let us have a picture, however superficial, of the villages in ancient India, which is particularly relevant in view of the fact that villages of old differed fundamentally from those of the present day. The villages of old were not merely economic or administrative units; they were centres of corporate life and culture. They had their festivals and festivities, folk songs and folk dances, sports and melas, which gave life to the people and sustained their enthusiasm. The amazing stability of the ancient village has been commented upon by one foreign observer after another. A Committee of the East India Company wrote as early as

\* For this and succeeding Para, I have drawn largely on Kuryenson : Rural Reconstruction, Principles and Methods, pp. 7-25.

in 1812, "Under the simple forms of municipal government the inhabitants of the country have lived from times immemorial.....the inhabitants give themselves no trouble about the breaking up and division of kingdoms. While the village remains entire they care not to what power it is transferred or to what sovereign it devolves. Its internal autonomy remains unchanged." Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Charles Metcalfe give similar opinions in their own felicitous language. The former writes: "One foreign conqueror after another has swept over India, but the village municipalities have stuck to the soil like their own kusha grass"; the latter observes: "Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds revolution, Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English all are masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves. A hostile army passes through the country, the village community collect their cattle within their walls and let the army pass unprovoked". Elsewhere he says, "The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves; and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence." Thus there is a universal consensus of opinion on the unique position which villagers in ancient India occupied in the scheme of life. It is difficult in modern times to visualise the glorious position which our villages of old held. They were self-governing and self-sufficient units. Karl Marx in his *Das Kapital* pays a well-deserved tribute to our ancient villages, when he says "they constitute self-sufficient productive entities.....The simplicity of the productive organism in these self-sufficient communities.....unlocks for us the mystery of the unchangeableness of the Asiatic Society which contrasts so strongly with the perpetual dissolutions and reconstructions of the Asiatic states, and the unceasing changes of dynasties. The structure of the elements of the society remains unaffected by the storms of the political weather."

Sleeman gives another tribute to this ancient institution in the following words, "There is perhaps no part in the world where the communities of which the society is composed have been left so much to self-government, as in India. The village communities were everywhere left almost entirely to self-government and the virtues of truth and honesty were indispensable to enable them to govern themselves." There is no space here to discuss other interesting features of ancient villages, viz., village temple, with its fairs, festivals and melas; its joint family and caste systems and its homage to Ramayana and Mahabharata which moulded social and individual life to an extent unimaginable to-day.

#### 110. Villages today:

If a villager in ancient India were to rise from his grave and visit a village of the twentieth century, he would be shocked by what he would see around him. He will no longer find the village to be the centre of political, economic or social activities but perceive that it has degenerated into a mere administrative unit, a small cog of a big machine. He will also miss the virile Panchayats of old and the sense of solidarity and cooperative effort that marked villages in ancient India. Agriculture will be found to have fallen on evil days and cottage industry under eclipse. Degeneracy, degradation and demoralisation—these may perhaps sum up his impressions.

Villages in modern India have been characterised as rural slums. "Poverty and need" observes Dr. Spencer Hatch, "make themselves evident when one goes among the village people of rural India". Poverty is the central fact of rural life, poverty—economic, intellectual and physical. The villages no longer hum with vigorous economic or social activities, but are merely a "collection of insanitary dwellings situated on a dung hill." Here is a description of a typical Indian village. "The ill-clad villagers, men, women and children, thin and weakly and made old beyond their years by a life of under-feeding and over-work, have been astir before day break and have partaken of a scanty meal.....with bare and hardened feet they reach their fields and immediately begin to furrow the soil. A short rest at midday and a handful of dried corn and beans for food is followed by a continuance till dusk of the same laborious scratching of the soil. Then the weary

way homeward in the chilly evening, every member of the family shaking with malaria or fatigue; a drink of water probably contaminated; the munching of a piece of hard black or green chappathi; a little gossip round the pipal tree; and then the day ends with heavy unrefreshing sleep in dwellings so insanitary that no decent European farmer would house his cattle among them." Arnold Lupton has described in pathetic terms the condition of the rural folk. "His mansion is a mud-hut with a roof of stick and palm-leaves; his bedstead, if he has one, consists of twisted sticks which raise his mattress, if he has one, six inches from the ground. He has no doors or windows to his hut. He has a little fireplace and cooking place outside. The sofa upon which he can recline in leisure moments is made of mud outside his sleeping chamber. He has one garment round his loins and he has no other garment that he can wear whilst he is washing the one garment. He neither smokes nor drinks nor reads the newspaper; he goes to no entertainments. His religion teaches him humility and contentment and so he lives contentedly until starvation lays him on his back." Similarly M. L. Darling who visited some of the provinces in Central and Northern India about 1945-46 records his impressions in the following words: "Rarely in this area did we find a village with any but the most meagre facilities. In one having about 2,000 inhabitants 4 miles from Agra there was no dispensary for man or beast, no Panchayat, Post Office, not even a recognised school. Its only amenity was a cooperative society. In another village in the same district there was no dispensary within 12 miles."

A modern picture of a village will bring out its poverty, ignorance and disease, congested and miserable housing, unhealthy and insanitary conditions, water-tight social compartments with untouchability as the crowning blot on any religious system, its submission to numerous religious rites, rituals and ceremonies, lack of educational and recreational facilities, etc., etc. This is not the appropriate place to narrate the causes which led to this degeneracy. The impact of the British as well as the industrial revolution on the Indian villages will require a history by itself. I shall here merely quote R. C. Dutt: "One of the saddest results of the British rule in India is the effacement of that system of

self-government which was developed earliest and preserved longest in India among all the countries of the earth."

#### 111. Reference to statistics :

Statistics about the total number of villages, towns and cities in the different Natural Divisions, and districts will be found in Table A-1 (Area Houses and Population), given in Part II-A of this Report. Table A-III in the same Part contains the classification of towns and villages by population. The classification adopted in the Table recognises the following groups of population :—

- (a) less than 500;
- (b) 500-1,000;
- (c) 1,000-2,000;
- (d) 2,000-5,000;
- (e) 5,000-10,000;
- (f) 10,000-20,000;
- (g) 20,000-50,000;
- (h) 50,000-100,000;

and (i) above 100,000.

This classification is practically in conformity with the recommendation of the United Nations Population Commission but at the time of making comparisons with the figures of other states and Countries, the definition of the village and town as given above should be borne in mind. The following five Subsidiary Tables given in Part I-B of the Report are reviewed in this Chapter.

- 2.1 Distribution of population between villages;
- 2.2 Variation and density of rural population;
- 2.3 Mean decennial growth-rate during three decades—rural population;
- 2.4 Livelihood pattern of rural population, and 2.5 Immigration into rural areas.

Subsidiary Table 2.1 corresponds to some of the columns of Subsidiary Table I (Distribution of the population between towns and villages) at the end of Chapter II of the Census Report of 1931. Subsidiary Tables 2.2 to 2.5 are new tables and no corresponding Subsidiary Tables were prepared in 1931. The comparability of the main Tables with 1931, statistics has already been referred to in Appendix 3.



Certain detailed statistics for every village will be found in the corresponding District Census Hand-Book of each district, including the area, number of houses and households, total population with break-up for males and females, household population with similar break-up and classification of the population

by sex into eight livelihood classes. The consolidated rural figures for each main Table for each Census tract will also be found in the District Census Hand-Books. In Part II-A and II-B of the Census Report, rural and urban statistics are given separately in the case of the more important tables.

## SECTION II

### GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF AND DISTRIBUTION AMONG VILLAGES CLASSIFIED BY SIZE OF RURAL POPULATION

#### 112. General distribution of rural population.

Table 2.1 given below shows up the overwhelming rural nature of Assam. As many as 8,629,289 persons out of a total 9,043,707 *i.e.*, 95.4 per cent. of the entire population live in rural areas, while only 414,418 were censused in the urban areas forming 4.6 per cent of the total. If it is true that India lives in its villages, it is far more so for Assam, whose percentage of rural population is much higher than that of India, (83).

TABLE 2.1

*Population, Total, Rural and Urban, of Assam and its Natural Divisions*

	Assam		Assam Plains		Assam Hills	
	Total	per cent	Total	per cent	Total	per cent
Total :	9,043,707	100	7,805,558	100	1,238,149	100
Rural :	8,629,289	95.4	7,467,939	95.7	1,161,350	93.6
Urban :	414,418	4.6	337,619	4.3	76,799	6.4

Details of the distribution of rural and urban population in districts and thanas of Assam will be found in Table E (Summary Figures by Districts and Thanas), in Part II-A of this Report. In the rural population, 4,565,930 are males and 4,063,359 are females; whereas in the urban areas males and females are 246,236 and 168,182, respectively. The rural areas occupy practically cent per cent of the area of Assam. All but an utterly insignificant portion, 52.6 square miles, *i.e.*, less than 0.1 per cent of its total area is covered by villages. 95.7 per cent of the population of the Assam Plains Division is rural against 93.8 per cent in Assam Hills.

This may appear surprising as normally we should expect a larger percentage of urban population in the plains. This reversal of the roles of two natural divisions is due to the presence of Shillong with cantonment with its large urban population of 58,000 in hills. This will be clear when we analyse the figures district-wise in the two divisions. From column 3 of Subsidiary Table 2.3, we notice a uniform tendency for every district of Assam Plains to have round about 95 per cent of its population in the rural areas. The percentage varies within the narrow limits of 94.5 for Cachar against 97.5 for Darrang. Cent per cent population of 4 out of 5 plains areas of the N. E. F. A. excepting Mishmi Hills is rural as they have no towns. In the autonomous districts, cent per cent population in Garo Hills is rural, while the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills has 98.7, Naga Hills 98 and Lushai Hills 96.5. Only United K. and J. Hills district has 83.9 per cent of its population in the villages; this low percentage is responsible for Assam Hills having a smaller proportion of rural population than Assam Plains.

#### 113. Number of Villages :

This huge rural population of Assam numbering 8,629,289 lives in its 25,327 villages against the urban population of 414,418 living in 28 towns. By far the large majority of the villages, 17,948 *i.e.*, 70 per cent, is found in Assam Plains, Assam Hills having only 7,379 or 30 per cent. Goalpara, though not the most populous district in Assam,—an honour which goes to Kamrup,—boasts of 4,148 villages, or nearly 1/6th of the total number of villages in Assam or 1/4th of those in the Plains, while

Kamrup has only 2,789, Nowgong, smallest in area and population, has the least number, 1,735. Out of 7,079 villages in Assam Hills, Garo Hills contains 2,257 with the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills 1,871 and the United K. and J. Hills, 1,802. The decline in the number of villages of the last named is due to the transfer of Blocks I and II of its Jowai Sub-division to the newly created United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district. The villages of Naga Hills and Lushai Hills are larger and, therefore, fewer, 496 and 631, respectively. In the N. E. F. A. areas, only 121 villages were censused in Mishmi Hills, 74 in Abor Hills, 60 in Tirap Frontier Tract, 51 in Balipara Frontier Tract and 16 in Naga Tribal Area.

#### 114. Average population per Village :

The large rural population of 8,629,289 is distributed in 25,327 villages giving an average population of 341 persons per village. The average for Assam Plains, 416, is far higher than that for Assam Hills, 157. It is but natural to find dense villages in regularly cultivated areas of Assam Plains than in Assam Hills with its shifting cultivation. The average in 1931 for Assam as then constituted was only 250 persons per village. The growth in the number of villages not having kept pace with the increase in population, the pressure of population in existing as well as new villages is much greater than what it was 20 years ago. In Sibsagar, the average per village is as high as 527 but it falls to less than half this peak number in Goalpara, 257. In Assam Hills, the highest population per village, 407, is in the Naga Hills.

The following extract from the District gazetteer of Naga Hills, is worth reproducing : "The Naga villages are very different from the straggling groves of plantains, palms and bamboos, to which in the plains this name is usually applied. They are generally built along the tops of hills, and in the old days of inter-tribal feuds were strongly fortified and entered through a village gate. In the plains of Assam it is often hard to say where one village ends and the next begins; but there is none of this uncertainty in the Naga Hills. The village is like a little town which often stands out sharp

against the sky line, and it possesses distinct and definite village lands which are cultivated by its inhabitants, or are sometimes let to their less fortunate neighbours. The villages, which are usually large, as a rule occupy the most commanding points along the ridges, and the approaches to them are exceedingly pretty. Broad roads bordered with grass and low shrubs lead up, through avenues of fine trees, to the main entrance which is generally very strongly guarded by two or three panjied ditches, running right across the ridge and stockaded on the inner bank. The houses are packed close together, and there are no fruit trees, bamboos or gardens round them. But this absence of vegetation has no doubt a most salutary effect, as it leaves the place exposed to the purifying influence of the sun and air." The introduction of terrace cultivation in the last few decades has increased the population per village which was already large in this district for purposes of defence and security. The average in Lushai Hills is 300 while it is only 87 in the new district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. Even the far-off Naga Tribal Area (439) does not fail to exhibit the same tendency as shown by its regularly administered sister district of Naga Hills.

#### 115. Four groups of villages :

Main Table A-III gives classification of towns and villages combined into various categories of population and the data are summarised in Subsidiary Table 2.1. For convenience of treatment villages can be divided into following four broad groups :

- (1) **Very large**—Villages with a population of 5,000 and above;
- (2) **Large**—Those with a population 2,000 to 5,000;
- (3) **Medium**—Those with a population of 500 to 2,000; and
- (4) **Small**—Those with a population below 500.

#### 115A. Very large villages :

According to Subsidiary Table 2.1, 0.8 per cent of the rural population of the State lives in 'very large villages', i.e., with a population of 5,000 and above. Normally such villages are regarded

as towns, but they are not treated as such on account of their distinct rural characteristics. Such villages are exclusively confined to Assam Plains, none whatsoever being found in Assam Hills. There also they exist only in the three districts of Kamrup, Goalpara and Nowgong, others showing blank. Kamrup shows a very significant percentage of 3.4 of its rural masses living in such large villages, followed by Goalpara's 1.4. Actually such very large villages account for a large fraction of population than 0.8 shown by Subsidiary Table 2.1 because some large rural areas like Badarpur and Digboi are not included herein, on account of their being tabulated as small units.

Table 2.2 below gives a list of all places in Assam which have not been treated as towns for one reason or another, inspite of their having a population of 5,000 and above. Their population with the Livelihood break-up is also given.

TABLE 2.2

*Villages with a population of 5,000 and above not treated as urban areas, with their livelihood breakup*

District	Villages	Total Population	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural
1	2	3	4	5
Cachar	Badarpur	5,893	1	5,892
Goalpara	Bongaigaon	5,373	392	4,981
	Mankachar	9,593	2,143	6,450
Kamrup	Pandu	18,096	24	18,072
	Nij Chamota	5,054	3,707	1,347
	Nij Hajo	6,308	2,307	4,001
	Salkuchi	7,598	487	7,111
	Rampur	5,118	4,116	1,002
	Tarabari	5,324	1,516	3,808
Nowgong	Hojai	6,455	1,218	5,237
Lakhimpur	Digboi	23,691	843	22,848
United K & J Hills	Happy Valley	5,849	'nil'	5,849

Thus a total population of 104,342 has not been treated as urban though it lives in clusters exceeding 5,000 persons. Scrutinising the list we find that Kamrup monopolises the number (6) and total population (47,498) of such large villages. In the whole list, Rampur and Nij Chamota in the district of Kamrup are the only villages in which agricultural classes outnumber the non-agricultural. In all other cases non-agricultural classes definitely outnumber the agricultural. Out of the total population of 18,096

of Pandu, as many as 13,229 fall under livelihood class VII—Transport, thus declaring from the housetops its importance as a railway colony and station. On a smaller scale the same is the case with Badarpur which contains 4,485 persons under 'transport' out of a total population of 5,893. Bongaigaon under North Salmara police station has only 206 persons under 'transport', though it has an important railway workshop, while Mankachar under South Salmara without any railway station has as many as 213 persons under 'transport'. The reason of this anomaly is that the persons working in the Bongaigaon railway workshop and those employed by the railway Maintenance Division are included under class V, not under 'Transport' or class VII. Digboi is the headquarters of the Assam Oil Co., an important industrial centre in the district of Lakhimpur, but it was not recommended for being treated as a new urban area. I have already shown Badarpur, Pandu and Digboi in the fly-leaf of main Table A-V and I recommend to my successor to treat them as full-fledged urban areas in view of their definite urban characteristics. Apart from these three, he may also have to treat North Gauhati (4,915) as an urban area because its population will exceed 5,000 at the next census, coupled with the establishment of a small town committee which came into being soon after the 1951 census. Happy Valley is not at all a village in the sense we understand it. It is a military station which shows no population at all under agricultural classes and has as many as 5,653 persons out of a total of 5,849 under class VIII.

#### 115B. Large Villages :

Villages with a population of 2,000 to 5,000 contain 7.7 per cent of the rural population of the State. The break-up for the Natural Divisions is 8.7 for Assam Plains and 1.7 for Assam Hills, showing that such large villages are very largely confined to the Assam Plains, wherein the proportion varies from 14.9 per cent in the case of Lakhimpur to 4.7 for Goalpara. Lakhimpur obviously requires some explanation. Its rural density, only 252 persons per square mile, is the lowest in the whole division due to the low density of North Lakhimpur sub-division with its many scattered villages. The district as a whole does not contain any thana with a density of 600 and above; it is the non-homogenous character of the district which is responsible for this phenomenon. Dibrugarh sub-division has

several large villages in this group. In the Hills, large villages (2,000 to 5,000) are found in only three districts, Naga Hills (6.2) being outstanding among them, while Garo Hills and the United K. & J. Hills contain 1.7 and 1.2 per cent respectively.

#### 115C. Medium villages :

This is the largest group in Assam containing exactly half per cent of the entire rural population 49.6 per cent. This group is much smaller in Assam Hills, containing little over 27 per cent of the population; in Assam Plains it is exactly double, 54 per cent. This is natural in Assam Hills for it is difficult to find villages of any size except the smallest because of inhospitable, mountainous regions with their difficulties of communications, transport, and lack of economic progress. The percentage in the Plains districts varies from 31.6 for Goalpara to 66.8 in Nowgong, which is closely followed by Sibsagar 65.6 and Cachar 64.3. The percentage for Naga Hills, which is 56.8 is strikingly high for any hills district but it merely confirms what has been said earlier about the size of its villages. The Naga Tribal Area 62.4 per cent may be ignored as its proportion refers to only 16 among its villages.

#### 115D. Small villages :

This is the second largest group of villages in Assam containing 42 per cent of its rural population. This group of villages is far larger in Assam Hills where it contains as much as 71 per cent of the entire population against 37.4 only in the Assam Plains. Nearly two thirds of the population of Goalpara lives in such villages while the proportion falls to barely one fourth for Nowgong and Sibsagar. 93 per cent of the population of the districts of Garo Hills and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills live in small villages. Any one familiar with the socio-economic life of Assam Hills will know why the figure for Garo Hills is as high as 92.6 while it is even higher (95.9) for the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. The Garo or Mikir villages are extremely small, often consisting of only a few houses, all traces of which may disappear once they are shifted to other

sites of *jhuming*. In Naga Hills, as we should expect by now, this group shows the lowest percentage (37).

#### 116. Pace of urbanisation :

Subsidiary Table 8.9 in Part I-B of this Report gives the rural and urban break-up of the population of Assam, its natural divisions and districts in 1921, 1931 and 1941. Table 2.3 below, which is based on the former, gives the rural and urban percentage of population in Assam at each of the past four censuses.

TABLE 2.3  
*Rural and urban population of Assam*

Year	Percentage of population which was	
	Rural	Urban
1921	97.6	2.4
1931	97.0	3.0
1941	96.7	3.3
1951	95.4	4.6

It is clear from the table what the pace of urbanisation in Assam has been. The urban population constituted 2.4 per cent of the total in 1921 and rose to only 4.6 per cent after 30 years. This increase of a bare 2.2 per cent in the urban population of Assam in such a long period as 30 years immediately expresses how slow is the rate of its growth. Conversely rural Assam continues to remain overwhelmingly rural, its rurality declining by only 2.2 per cent during the last 30 years. Even if we take into consideration an extra population of 52,595 of the four areas of North Gauhati, Pandu, Badarpur and Digboi given in the fly-leaf of Table A-V which is given in Part II-A of the Report, the percentage of urban population does not rise beyond 5.16.

#### 117. Rurality of Assam compared with other States of India :

Assam is most rural of all States of India. Orissa and Himachal Pradesh, each having 96 per cent of its population in rural areas, are the only States which slightly exceed the Assam percentage of 95.4. India shows a percentage of 83 which falls to 69 in the case of Bombay. Table 2.4 given below shows the percentages of

rural and urban population in India and some of its States :—

TABLE 2.4\*

*Rural and urban population in India and some of its States*

State	Percentage of population, which is	
	Rural	Urban
India	83	17
Assam	95	5
Bihar	93	7
Orissa	96	4
West Bengal	75	25
Bombay	69	31
Madras	80	20
Uttar Pradesh	86	14
Punjab	81	19
Madhya Pradesh	87	13
Himachal Pradesh	96	4
Saurashtra	66	34
Mysore	76	24

Among the most urbanised States of India are Saurashtra, Bombay, West Bengal, Mysore and Madras, where the percentage of urbanisation is above 20. Assam is obviously far more rural than India as a whole. The following table 2.5 gives the rural urban break-up of certain countries in the world :—

TABLE 2.5\*

*Percentage of Rural and Urban populations in some countries*

Country	Percentage of population which is		
	Year	Rural	Urban
United States	1940	43.5	56.5
Sweden	1935	67.7	32.3
Japan	1925	35.5	64.5
Germany	1933	43.5	56.3
France	1936	53.1	46.9
England	1930	22.7	77.3
Canada	1930	58.3	41.7

If the pace of urbanisation is to be taken as an index of economic progress, the above figures show how this pace in Assam and India is as slow as economic progress has been up to date. Pointing out how the Soviet Far East, which is more comparable to India has made rapid stride in urbanisation from 1880, when the percentage of urban population was only 13.5, to 1939, when it rose to 32.2 per cent.

\* S. Chandrasekhar—India's Population—Fact and Policy, p. 30.

S. Chandrasekhar says\* "Russia today like India, is a country with predominantly rural population, but unlike India, she has made great progress, not only in bringing the usual urban conveniences to the rural population, but in actually urbanising the countryside, in the best sense of the term". The rural population of Japan in 1893 was 84 per cent of the total from which it declined to 51 per cent by 1948. In Assam this index of economic progress immediately tells us how slow, halting and inadequate our own progress has been. The urban population of Assam was 2.4 per cent in 1921, 3.0 in 1931 and 3.3 in 1941 from which it now stands at 4.6 in 1951.

#### 118. Density of Rural Population :

TABLE 2.6

*Density of General and Rural Population of Assam and its Natural Divisions (1951)*

Name	Density per square mile
Assam General	176
" Rural	168
Assam Plains General	339
" " Rural	325
Assam Hills General	44
" " Rural	41

The Table gives the density of rural population of Assam and its Natural Divisions. Against the overall density of the State of 176 persons per square mile, the density of rural Assam is slightly lower, 168. The density of rural Assam is very low compared with some of the major Part A States like Bihar or West Bengal; but this is due to the vast area of Assam Hills, which can only support a meagre and sparse population and which brings down the overall density figure. Actually the density of Assam Plains Rural is 325 persons per square mile which is a fairly high average indeed, considering the vast areas covered by rivers, forests, waste, swamps, hills, etc.

Among the districts, Rural Cachar has the highest density of 392 followed very closely by Nowgong 390. Kamrup has 369 persons per square mile, while Lakhimpur brings up the rear with 252. The density of Assam Hills Rural is barely 41. Garo Hills being entirely rural has the same density for its general as well as rural population, viz., 77 persons per square mile.

\* S. Chandrasekhar—India's Population—Fact and Policy, p. 30.

The United K & J Hills district has a density of 55, in spite of having Shillong within its borders. Lushai Hills, due to its extraordinarily sparse population, has the lowest density of 23 among the autonomous districts. The density figures of the rural areas of N. E. F. A. which vary from 18 for Balipara Frontier Tract to 141 in Naga Tribal Areas can safely be ignored as unrealistic, if not misleading, as they do not take into account the entire area of its districts.

#### 119. General Distribution of Rural Population of Manipur :

Out of the total population of 577,635 all but 2,862 are rural. 574,773 persons or 99.5 per cent of the people live in rural areas of Manipur, while only one half per cent of its population is urban. These figures show a drastic decline in the urban population and a corresponding increase in the rural over the figures of the previous censuses. This is due to treating the town of Imphal differently at the present census. In 1941, the whole of Imphal with a population of 99,716 was included under urban which gave Manipur an urban percentage 19.5 against 80.5 rural. If this had been continued at the present census Imphal with its present population of over a lakh would have blossomed forth into a city; actually it was included as such in the preliminary figures prepared by the Registrar General. Later on the classification was modified and Imphal deleted from the list of cities of India. Not to talk of a city, Imphal cannot be called a town in view of its predominately rural and agricultural character. Excluding a fraction of its central portion with a population of 2,862 souls, which is urban in character the whole of Imphal has been treated as rural for purposes of the Tables of the A-series. For all other tables, the whole State has been treated as rural without any violence to its basic character. There are 281,932 males and 292,841 females in the rural areas of Manipur, while those in the urban area are 1,753 and 1,109 respectively. The average population of Manipur per village is 359 against 271 in 1941 or 262 in 1931, thus registering an increase of nearly 33 per cent over the 1941 average. Just like Assam, the largest proportion of Manipur's rural population, viz., 43.7 per cent lives in medium sized village, with a population of 500 to 2,000. Over a third lives in small villages with a population below 500, while as large as 16.8 per cent of its population lives in villages of the size 2,000

to 5,000. This figure is far greater than that of any other district of Assam Plains or Assam Hills; surpassing even Lakhimpur (14.9).

Another surprising fact about Manipur is that an additional 3.7 per cent of its population lives in 'very large villages' with a population of 5,000 and above as given in Table 2.7.

TABLE 2.7

*Population of villages in Manipur with more than 5,000 not treated as urban areas, with their livelihood break-up*

State	Village	Total Population	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural
Manipur	Thanga	5,580	2,249	3,340
	Thengmeiban	6,433	2,055	4,378
	Sagalban	9,592	1,025	8,567

In all these three villages non-agricultural classes greatly outnumber the agricultural ones; they also have population of over 5,000 each. Yet the reasons for not treating them as urban areas is that they have no urban characteristics or civic amenities which can differentiate them from the surrounding rural areas. The percentage of 3.7 which these 'very large-villages' constitute is higher than that in any district of Assam; Kamrup alone comes anywhere near Manipur in this respect with its percentage of 3.4 in this class.

The density of rural Manipur is 67, similar to that of a hills district of Assam.

#### 120. General Distribution of Rural Population of Tripura :

In the total population 639,029 of Tripura, 596,435 (312,385 males and 284,049 females) is rural and the remaining 42,594 (23,204 males and 19,391 females) urban. Thus 93.3 per cent of the entire population of Tripura is rural resembling the Assam Hills Natural Division. The average population per village in Tripura at the present census is 173.

Tripura is a State whose population lives mostly in small villages. Nearly 3/4ths of its entire rural population, 72.5 per cent lives in small villages under 500 whereas another 1/4th lives in medium-sized villages with a population of 500-2,000. An insignificant proportion, viz., 2.4 per cent lives in large villages, all of them living in villages with a population 2,000-5,000 only. There is no village in Tripura with a population of 5,000 and over.

## SECTION III

## GROWTH

121. **Growth of Population, Total and Percentage, of Rural Assam during last 50 years :**

In Chapter I, I have already treated in considerable detail the growth of General Population of Assam during the last 50 years. The causes of the tremendous growth of Assam's population during the last 50 years have been explained at length giving a complete background, political, economic and social of the past decade. By far the large portion of this overall growth is naturally registered by Assam rural which contains, as we have seen already, 95.4 per cent of the entire population of Assam. Hence there is no need to cover the same ground over again here. The drift towards the urban areas from the rural which is a significant development during the past 50 years in India, and many of its States, is yet to gather its due momentum in Assam. I shall be content here with merely giving some important statistics of Rural Assam with brief comments.

TABLE 2.8

*Growth of Rural Population in Assam during last 50 years*

Year	Population	Total Growth	Percentage Growth
1901	3,724,400		
1911	4,373,886	649,486	17.4
1921	5,169,490	795,604	18.2
1931	6,152,995	983,505	19.0
1941	7,343,271	1,190,276	19.3
1951	8,629,289	1,286,018	17.5

Table 2.8 reveals the same fact of tremendous and continuous increase in the population of Rural Assam during the last 50 years, as in the case of the general population. I shall deal with the growth in terms of percentage rate of increase instead of the more refined concept of the Mean Decennial Growth Rate. It is not possible to calculate the latter separately for Rural and Urban Assam in view of the non-availability of vital statistics regarding the entire Hills Division. Rural Assam never increased

at a rate less than 17½ per cent during any of the five decades of the present century. There is a slight fall in the decade 1941-51, from the two decades previous to it which is partly accounted for by the slightly increasing drift to the urban areas. In terms of total increments to its population, Rural Assam increased by 6.5 lakhs in the first, 7.9 in the second and 9.8 in the third decade of the present century. The overall growth for the last two decades is 11.9 in 1931-41 and 12.9 in 1941-51. Thus rural Assam shows a total increase of 49 lakhs during the last 50 years an increase of 131.7 per cent giving an annual percentage rate of increase of 2.6 which is only slightly less than that of Assam as a whole (2.7). Here we notice a repetition of the same trend of population growth as we discovered in Assam as a whole, viz., that the total population growth during the last two decades (24.8 lakhs), exceeds the combined increase in the first three decades (24.2 lakhs). (Refer to Chapter I, Section III here). The rural population has increased by 17.5 during 1941-51 against 19.3 in 1931-41 and 19.0 in 1921-31. These compare with the increases in general population during the same decades as follows :—

TABLE 2.9

*Percentage increase in General and Rural Population of Assam (1921-50)*

	Percentage increase during		
	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
General population	19.1	19.7	19.3
Rural Population	17.5	19.3	19.0

It is significant that while General Population shows a decline in percentage rate of growth from 19.7 to 19.1 during the last decade, the rural population shows a much greater decline, from 19.3 to 17.5. On account of the attraction of the towns and the greater economic opportunities available there, towns grow at much greater rate than villages under present conditions; this is the explanation of the lower rate of increase in Rural Assam against Assam as a whole.



## 122. Increase of Rural Population, Total and Percentage, in the Natural Divisions :

### 122A. Assam Plains :

TABLE 2.10

*Growth of Rural Population in Assam Plains  
(1901-50), 50 years*

Year	Population	Total Growth
1901	3,154,475	
1911	3,707,006	552,531
1921	4,437,156	730,150
1931	5,307,948	870,792
1941	6,287,308	979,360
1951	7,467,939	1,180,631

From the above Table we note that Assam Plains rural registered an overall growth of 5.5 lakhs in the first, 7.3 lakhs in the second and 8.7 lakhs in the third decade of the present century. The overall growth for the last two decades is 9.8 in 1931-41 and 11.8 in the past decade. Once again we find that the total growth during the last two decades in Assam Plains rural (21.6 lakhs) exceeds the combined growth of the first three decades (21.5 lakhs). It is really interesting how every single one of its seven districts displays the same tendency. The actual growth in the present two decades would be even greater but for the deduction of 96,041 of Mikir Hills areas of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur from Assam Plains to Assam Hills without any adjustment of their 1931 population. Assam Plains rural is, therefore, responsible for an overall growth of 43.1 lakh during the last 50 years out of a total 49 lakhs for Assam Rural, leaving only a growth of about 6 lakhs for Assam Hills.

TABLE 2.11

*Percentage growth of General and Rural  
population of Assam Plains (1921-50)*

	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
General Population	20.2	18.8	19.8
Rural Population	18.8	18.4	19.6

Rural population growth in 1941-50 is slightly greater than in the previous decade but slightly less than in 1921-30. Nowgong tops the list with an increase of 33.4 per cent in the rural population during the decade 1941-51. Darrang being second with 23.3 per cent and Goalpara the last of all with 8 per cent

only. For an explanation of such unequal percentage rates of increase, please refer to Section III, Chapter I.

Table 2.11 below summarises the Mean Decennial Growth Rates which are available for this Natural Division alone, and are given in Subsidiary Tables 1.3, 2.3, 3.3 for its General, Rural and Urban population respectively.

TABLE 2.12

*Mean Decennial Growth Rates of General,  
Rural and Urban Population of Assam Plains*

	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
General Population	17.4	17.9	17.6
Rural Population	17.3	16.9	17.9
Urban Population	46.5	24.1	24.1

The Mean Decennial Growth Rates reveal the same pattern as the percentage rates of increase. The pattern for Rural population is similar to that for General Population except that the disturbance on account of the migration from rural areas into urban affects the picture in some places. There is little difference between the Mean Decennial Growth Rates of General Population and Rural Population in all the three decades, whereas the difference between these two and that of Urban Population is there to see for any one who cares. In 1941-50 against a Mean Decennial Growth Rate of 17.4 for General and 17.3 for Rural Population, Urban Population shows a rate which is nearly three times larger. The disparity though significant in the two other decades is not of the same magnitude, thus showing that the trend towards urbanisation is definitely towards an increase in the past decade.

### 122B. Assam Hills :

TABLE 2.13.

*Growth of Rural Population of Assam Hills  
(1901-50)*

Year.	Population	Growth
1901	569,925	...
1911	666,880	96,955
1921	732,334	65,454
1931	845,047	112,713
1941	1,055,963	210,916
1951	1,161,350	105,387

The rural population of Assam Hills has increased from 5.7 lakhs in 1901 to

11.6 lakhs in 1951, giving an overall increase of 5.9 lakhs during the last 50 years, i.e., over 103.5 per cent. This gives an annual percentage rate of increase of only 2.1 against 2.5 for Assam Plains. During each decade of the century, Assam Hills invariably shows a smaller rate of growth than its sister Division. Factors responsible for it are mainly three, first, absence of any large scale immigration, in the Assam Hills, similar to that witnessed in Assam Plains; second, greater poverty of the people in the Hills, due to poorer economic opportunities and third poorer medical facilities, also due to difficulties of communications and transport in the hill areas. The overall increases decade by decade show an erratic pattern. The growth was a little less than a lakh in the first decade from which it fell to 65,000 in the second, rising again to 1.1 lakhs in the third decade of the present century. In 1931-41 the overall increase is 2.1 lakhs followed by 1 lakh in the past decade. Yet once again we notice that the total growth registered in the last two decades (3.1 lakhs) exceeds the combined growth in the first three decades of the present century (2.7 lakhs). The growth in the decade 1911-21 is barely over half a lakh because the influenza epidemic was even more severe in Assam Hills than elsewhere. The abnormally large increase in 1931-41 is due to the inclusion

of 96,042 persons within this Natural Division of the Mikir Hills areas of Nowgong and Sib-sagar which till then continued to be included under the Plains.

TABLE 2.13  
*Percentage growth of General and Rural  
Population of Assam Hills*

	Percentage growth rate		
	1941-50	1931-41	1921-31
General Population	12.4	25.3	16.2
Rural Population	10.0	25.0	15.4

The percentage rate of growth in 1931-41 (25.3), is very high because, as we have seen, of the inclusion of the 96,040 persons of Mikir Hills areas for the first time. The percentage rates of increase in General and Rural Population for the two decades except the last are easily comparable but there is a significant decrease in the two rates for the past decade, due firstly, to a drift to the urban areas within the Hills Division and secondly, to the large apparent decreases of—61.7,—39.0 and —8.7 per cent shown by the Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills and Mishmi Hills, respectively at the present census. These apparently high decreases are simply due to the omission of nearly 22,000 persons in these three Tracts from regular census operations as they are now within the Part B Tribal Areas of Assam.

## SECTION IV

### MOVEMENT

#### 123. Immigration into Rural Assam :

The problems of migration in general have already been discussed at great length in the previous chapter. Subsidiary Table 2.5 given in Part I-B of the Report shows that of the total rural population of 8,629,289 in Assam, as many as 7,279,376 i.e., 84.4 per cent were recorded during the census as having been born in the district of enumeration. Thus an overwhelming majority of the rural people pass their lives in places where they are born. Amongst 164,920 persons born elsewhere in the State as many as 134,130 or 1.7 per cent of the total rural were born in other district of the same Natural Division, leaving only 211,790 or 0.2 per cent for other parts of the State. Those

born in adjacent States were 33,748 or 0.4 per cent while those in other parts of India were 11 times as large, 376,222 or 4.4 per cent. People from Pakistan including the displaced persons and others who were enumerated in the rural areas of Assam numbered 720,537 (398,927 males and 321,610 females), or 8.3 per cent of the total population, leaving only 54,310 persons or 0.6 per cent in other territories beyond India.

#### 124. Immigration in the Natural Divisions :

The immigration pattern in the Natural Divisions does not differ in any substantial degree from what has been said above for the State as a whole. This is particularly so for Assam Plains, where the percentage of those born in

the districts of enumeration (82.8) is lower than that for the State as a whole (84.4), but in Assam Hills it is far higher than either, 94.3. Immigration in Assam Hills is far less than in Assam Plains because of the great natural, physical, social and legal barriers involved. Hence the considerable difference. Persons born in adjacent States constituted 0.4 per cent in Assam Plains but only 0.2 per cent in Assam Hills; those born in other States of India are 4.9 per cent in Assam Plains against only 1

per cent in the Assam Hills. Regarding persons coming from Pakistan, there is considerable variation, Assam Plains having as high as 9.3 per cent against only 2 in the Hills. The percentage of those coming from territories beyond India excepting Pakistan is more than double for the Hills than the Plains; this is largely due to the immigration of the Nepalis who are found in the Hill Districts. Table 1.4 given below summarises this discussion.

TABLE 2.15  
*Immigration, actual and percentage, in Rural Assam*

Persons enumerated in		PERSONS BORN IN						
		District of enumeration	Other districts of the same Natural Division	Other Parts State	Adjacent States	Other Parts of India	Beyond India (Pakistan)	Other territories
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ASSAM :	Total : 100	7,279,376 (84.4)	143,130 (1.7)	21,790 (0.2)	33,748 (0.4)	376,222 (4.4)	720,537 (8.3)	543,100 (6.6)
Assam plains :	Total : 100	1,184,600 (82.8)	139,568 (1.9)	9,307 (0.2)	31,667 (0.4)	364,554 (4.9)	697,337 (9.3)	40,743 (0.5)
Assam Hills :	Total : 100	1,094,776 (94.3)	3,562 (0.3)	12,483 (1.1)	2,068 (0.2)	11,668 (1.0)	23,200 (2.0)	3,3567 (1.1)

In each category of the rural immigration discussed above, there is a clear preponderance of males over females showing how there is an element of temporary migration in each category. The largest number of persons born in Pakistan and enumerated in Assam are found in Kamrup 175,810, followed by Nowgong 152,010 and Goalpara 124,660. These are the three districts which, apart from having a sizeable proportion of displaced persons, have attracted a tremendous stream of immigration from East Pakistan. Against these large numbers, those born in Pakistan and enumerated in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur are only 22,006 and 48,763 respectively. Immigration from Pakistan, as we have just seen is not of any great moment so far as Assam Hills is concerned, being only 23,200 for the entire Division, which is lower than that of any single Plains districts of Assam excepting Sibsagar. Garo Hills accounts for the largest number of 7,976; bordering as it does East Pakistan, it has sheltered a considerable number of refugees while its plains mawgas did not fail to attract Muslim immigrants as a magnet attracts iron fil-

ings. In the Lushai Hills we find as many as 6,396 persons from Pakistan. This is due to the migration of the Chakmas and the Riangs who migrated from Pakistan to India soon after the Partition from the Chittagong Hills Tracts.

The urban population of Assam is so small, less than 5 per cent of the total population, that it is not worth-while to discuss the immigration, if any, from rural areas into the urban, the numbers involved being very small. Apart from tea which is entirely a rural industry, there are no large-scale organized industries in Assam nor modern banking, commerce and trade which, elsewhere in the world, involve a permanent migration of people from rural areas to towns and cities. Subsidiary Table 3.8 (immigration into urban area) shows the migration into the urban areas from districts other than the district of birth. Unfortunately no statistics have been collected to show the volume of migration from the rural areas of a district into its urban areas and we can only have a rough idea of the movement from the comparative rate of

growth of the general, rural and urban population as indicated briefly in the previous section.

If the large natural resources of Assam are properly developed, there is a likelihood of large movement from the rural areas into the urban, especially in view of the strong stimulant forced upon the villagers by economic necessity, as shown by the marked reduction in the per capita cultivation in the State during the last three decades, which is discussed in Chapter IV.

Unfortunately, Subsidiary Table 2.3 does not throw any light on the problem of emigration from the rural into urban areas. Immigration into rural areas from East Bengal of land hungry Muslims and displaced persons has been so immense as to completely dwarf and obscure the much smaller reverse movement from them

into the towns. However, a comparison of the migration-cum-registration error of the rural and urban areas from Subsidiary Tables 2.3 and 3.3 reveals that this error is much higher in the urban areas than in the rural in every single case, showing much greater migration into urban areas. In the decades 1921-30 and 1931-40, when the displaced persons were yet to arrive, we see the same tendency, though the migration of Muslims was confined mainly to the rural areas where land for cultivation was available. The higher percentage of migration-cum-registration-error in Subsidiary Table 3.3 is, therefore, clearly an index of the movement of population from rural areas. In the decade 1941-50 the same tendency is noticeable except that the disparity has become even larger on account of the arrival of displaced persons in urban areas in much greater relative proportion than in the rural.

## SECTION V

### NATURAL INCREASE— BIRTHS AND DEATHS

#### 125. Mean Decennial Birth and Death Rates in Assam Plains Rural :

Unfortunately for Assam we do not find any vital statistics for the entire Assam Hills. As a result mean decennial birth rates and the death rates for the three decades 1921-30, 1931-40 and 1941-50 are available neither for the State as a whole nor for the Assam Hills Division, but only for the Assam Plains Natural Division. As conditions in Hills differ so greatly in several vital respects, economic, social, religious and educational, we cannot presume the rates for Assam Plains will apply even with modifications to Assam Hills at all. Let us, however, discuss here the figures for Assam Plains.

TABLE 2.16

*Mean decennial birth and death rates in Assam Plains for General, Urban and Rural Population (1921-30)*

	(Birth rates)			(Death rates)		
	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
General	16.8	25.6	27.1	11.4	17.2	20.8
Rural	16.8	25.5	27.1	11.4	17.2	20.8
Urban	18.4	28.3	25.9	10.3	16.4	19.9

We find that the mean decennial birth rate for rural areas in Assam Plains in the decade 1941-50 is 16.8 against 18.4 for urban areas; for 1931-40, the rates are 25.5 and 28.3 respectively, those for the decade 1921-30 being 27.1 and 25.9. Thus, the birth rates in rural areas for the last two decades are definitely lower than that for the urban, while the birth rate for the decade 1921-30 is higher. Considering the death rates, in 1941-50 the death rate for Assam Plains Rural was 11.4 against 10.3 in Urban; the figures for 1931-40 are 17.2 and 16.4 respectively, whereas for 1921-30 they are 20.8 and 19.9. Thus the mean decennial death rates for all the three decades in rural population of Assam Plains Natural Division are higher, though slightly, than the death rates in the urban areas. This is, as we should normally expect, in view of the higher standard of living and better medical facilities available in urban areas. The birth rates also should be normally higher for the rural population than for the Urban, but from the above figures, this is not the position during all the three decades. Hence no

confident analysis of these figures is available chiefly for the following reasons :—

- (i) The registration errors in regard to birth rates as well as death rates and the extent of these errors cannot be assumed to be the same in all rural areas or in all urban areas, though on the whole registration is more satisfactory in the urban areas than in the rural; and
- (ii) The urban figures get inflated to varying extent by births and deaths occurring to persons who have come into the urban areas temporarily for confinement or medical treatment as the case may be.

A likelihood of third possible source of error has been avoided by the omitting of vital statistics of towns for which figures for all the three decades were not available. Yet, slight error is bound to persist because the vital statistics for some of the areas treated as towns in the census are not available, and these areas have been treated as rural areas for purposes of vital statistics, and their figures are included in those of the rural areas.

I have not bothered to compare the figures of mean birth rates and death rates for General and Rural population of Assam Plains: they are the same in all cases. The reason is that for the purpose of natural increase such a small fraction of the General population is taken over for separate treatment under Urban, that for all practical purposes, the General and Rural population differ very slightly from one another leading to the same rates in all cases as shown in Table 2.17.

#### 126. Natural Increase, Actual and Percentage, in Assam Plains Rural :

TABLE 2.17

*Natural Increase, Actual and Percentage, in Assam Plains Rural*

	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
(1) Registered births	1,155,655	1,478,999	1,322,136
(2) Registered deaths	784,978	1,000,703	1,015,929
(3) Natural increase.	370,677	478,298	306,207
(4) Decennial rate of natural increase.	5.4	8.2	6.3

The decennial rate of natural increase which was 6.3 in 1921-30 rose to 8.2 in 1931-40 but fell to 5.4 in 1941-50, i.e., even below the 1921-30 level. It is not possible to draw any firm and accurate conclusions or to notice any general tendency in these figures

#### 127. Census growth and natural increase in Assam Plains Rural :

Table 2.18 gives the census growth as well as natural increase in Assam Plains Rural for the last three decades, both in terms of the over-all increase in numbers as well as the mean decennial growth rates.

TABLE 2.18

*Census growth and natural increase in Assam Plains Rural (1921-50)*

	1941-50		1931-40		1921-30	
	Total Growth Rate		Total Growth Rate		Total Growth Rate	
Census growth	1,192,045	17.3	983,704	16.9	871,957	17.9
Natural Increase	370,677	5.4	478,298	8.2	306,207	6.3
Difference i.e. MMRE	821,368	11.9	505,408	8.7	565,750	11.6

The difference between census growth and natural increase in all the three decades is immense, almost grotesque. For the decade 1921-30, this difference is 566,000 from which it came down to 505,000 in 1931-40. The difference in the past decade, however, is more than one and half times what we find in the previous decade viz., 821,000.

This immense difference between census growth and natural increase has already been called by us as Migration-cum-Registration error. Such a large difference is clearly an index of the fact that natural increase can never wholly or even sufficiently explain the immense growth of rural population in Assam in the past three decades. Two factors are responsible for this. The first and by far the larger is the immense migration of tea garden labour, East Bengal Muslim immigrants, the Nepalese and the Hindu refugees from East Pakistan. The second and the smaller factor is the gross omission in the recorded births as well as deaths. We have already discussed at length both these factors in Chapter I, hence there is no need to repeat the discussion here once again.

**128. Migration-cum-Registration error :**

Table 2.17 given in the preceding paragraph gives the rate of difference between the mean decennial growth rate and decennial rate of natural increase. This is what we call Migration-cum-Registration error. \*This combined factor was as high as 11.6 in 1921-30 from which it registered a considerable decline to 8.7 in 1931-40. For the present decade it has again shot up to 11.9 which is the highest in the last three decades. As in the case of the general population, we are not in a position to determine the net balance of migration, because we do not have figures for the number of migrants, for their rural and urban break up. Hence we can neither determine the rate of migration, nor arrive at net registration error by subtracting the rate of migration from the combined Migration-cum-Registration error. We shall, therefore, have to be content with merely a few observations on this combined factor.

It is extremely significant to find the district of Nowgong showing a Migration-cum-Registration error rate of 29 per cent in 1921-30, remaining almost as high as ever in 1941-50 viz., 25.5. This extremely low figure of 7.9 for the decade 1931-40 is mainly due not on account of a decline either in the number of emigrants coming there nor due to a decline in the registration error but due to the removal of its Mikir Hills areas without any adjustment in the figure. Kamrup and Darrang similarly show a very high Migration-cum-Registration error, nor is Lakhimpur far behind them. Heavy emigra-

tion is largely responsible for this. The district of Goalpara shows a declining rate of Migration-cum-Registration error, confirming the decline in emigration into this district. The rate for 1941-50 is so low as 3.6; the emigration of Muslims who went over to Pakistan as a result of the communal incidents in this district in early 1950 and the failure of some of them to return to their home district by the time the census was taken, is one of the factors leading to this extremely low rate. Migration-cum-Registration error for Sibsagar is uniformly very low confirming the fact of a smaller immigration therein than in any other district of the Assam valley.

Cachar has practically no Migration-cum-Registration error in 1931-40. There are two reasons for this phenomenon; first, practically there is no emigration into this district, and second, its vital statistics are better recorded than anywhere in the Assam valley. Its Migration-cum-Registration error, for the past decade, however, has shot up to 12.5, which is mainly on account of the arrival of nearly a lakh of Hindu refugees from Pakistan within its limits. Its negative Migration-cum-Registration error for the decade 1921-30, viz., minus 1.2 is the only negative sign that we find for any district of the Assam Plains Natural Division during the entire period of the last 30 years. Its vital statistics being better recorded, this negative migration-cum-registration error is an indication of a small amount of emigration from this district to which we find references in the relevant census reports.

**SECTION VI****LIVELIHOOD PATTERN****129. Livelihood Pattern of Urban Assam :**

**TABLE 2.19**  
*Percentage distribution of Livelihood Classes of Rural Assam*

Livelihood Class	Assam	Assam plains	Assam hills
I	60.5	57.1	82.2
II	13.3	14.7	4.6
III	1.8	1.6	2.9
IV	0.9	1.0	0.5
Total Agriculture :— (I-IV)	76.5	74.4	90.2

	Assam	Assam plains	Assam hills
V	14.6	16.4	3.1
VI	2.8	3.0	1.3
VII	1.0	1.1	0.5
VIII	5.1	5.1	4.8
Total Non-Agriculture (V-VIII) :—	23.5	25.6	9.7

Table 2.19 gives a bird's eye-view of the livelihood pattern of the rural population of Assam and its Natural Divisions. It is not at

all difficult to realise how rural Assam is overwhelmingly dependent on agriculture for its means of livelihood. 76.5 per cent of the total population of Assam Rural is supported by agriculture, and only 23.4 per cent by non-agriculture. On account of the presence of tea industry which is confined to the rural areas, these figures are a tremendous improvement on those of some of the purely agricultural States of India, where dependence on agriculture is in some cases 90 per cent and above. This is, indeed, gratifying so far as it goes, though it does not go far enough. Tea industry is mainly agricultural in its nature, and if we take out about 10 per cent dependent on tea industry from Livelihood Class V and add them on to agriculture, the percentage of those dependent on agriculture would jump up to over 86 per cent.

Among the four agricultural classes, Livelihood Class I is by far the largest. Three-fifths of the entire rural population of Assam are Owner-cultivators and 13.3 per cent Cultivating Tenants. The percentage of Agricultural Labourers 1.8 per cent is extremely low, but that of agricultural rent receivers and landlords is even lower 0.9.

Among the non-agricultural classes, the largest is Class V which returns 14.6 per cent of the of the total rural population. Commerce supports 2.8 per cent, transport barely 1 per cent, and Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources like Government service, professions, servants of local authorities, etc., account for 5.1 per cent. Thus, in Assam Owner Cultivators are by far the largest class, Class V (production other than cultivation) which mainly means tea, is the second largest, followed by cultivating tenants as a close third. Livelihood Classes IV and VII are practically insignificant whereas Class III is just noticeable. Agricultural labourers which form only 1.8 per cent of the total rural population are far less in Assam than for example, in Madras where they constitute 21.1 per cent and in Madhya Pradesh where they are 22.7 per cent.

### 130. Livelihood Pattern in Natural Divisions :

Among the two Natural Divisions, Assam Hills Rural is dependent on agriculture to a far greater extent than Assam Hills as a whole does. The percentage of agricultural population of Assam Hills Rural is as high as 90 per cent.

Whatever industries Assam has, and these are very few, are practically non-existent in the Assam Hills. Hence the percentage supported by Non-Agriculture in the rural areas of Assam Hills is only 2/5th that in the rural areas of Assam Plains.

The livelihood pattern of Assam Plains differs very little from that of Rural Assam which has already been described above. The percentage of Owner Cultivators is slightly lower, and that of Cultivating Tenants proportionately higher in Assam Plains than in Assam. Agricultural labourers and Agricultural rent receivers maintain practically the same relative proportions. Among the Non-Agricultural Classes, Classes VI, VII and VIII are more or less the same while Class V is slightly larger in the Plains. This is because within Assam the tea industry is confined to this Natural Division alone.

We have already seen that agriculture plays an even more important part in the economic life of Assam Hills than in Assam Plains or Assam as a whole. The percentage of people supported by agriculture in Assam Hills is as high as 90.2, which is 16 per cent larger than that in Assam Plains. By far the largest among all classes is Class I which alone contains as much as 82.2 per cent of the entire rural population of Assam Hills, far larger than the total of all agricultural classes in Assam or Assam Plains, i.e. nearly a fourth larger than either. Cultivating Tenants are only 4.6 per cent in Assam Hills mainly because of the absence of any tenure in the Hills, as a result of which the percentage here is only the 2/7th of what is found in Assam Plains. The percentage of agricultural labourers in the Hills is nearly twice as much as in Assam Plains than that of agricultural rent receivers is only half. From Table 2.19 a significant fact immediately emerges viz. in every single Livelihood Class under non-agriculture the percentage in Assam Hills is lower than in Assam or Assam Plains. For example, 4.8 per cent of the rural population of Assam Hills support themselves by other services and miscellaneous sources, in Assam Plains the percentage is 5.1. For commerce the percentages are respectively 1.3 and 3.0 and for transport 0.5 and 1.1. The disparity is greatest in Production Other than Cultivation, 3.1 in Assam Hills against 16.4 in Assam Plains, for reasons already mentioned above.



### 131. Salient features of Livelihood Pattern in districts :

Table 2.20 below gives the Livelihood Pattern of the seven plains districts and five autonomous districts of Assam in two broad groups, Agriculture and Non-Agriculture :—

TABLE 2.20

*Livelihood Pattern in the plains and autonomous districts*

Serial No.	Name of the district	Percentage of population, which is	
		Agricultural	Non-Agricultural
1.	Cachar—General	59.9	40.1
	Rural	63.2	36.8
2.	Goalpara—General	85.2	14.8
	Rural	88.2	17.8
3.	Kamrup—General	80.5	19.6
	Rural	84.2	15.9
4.	Darrang—General	70.5	29.5
	Rural	72.5	27.8
5.	Nowgong—General	85.4	14.6
	Rural	89.4	10.6
6.	Sibsagar—General	64.5	35.5
	Rural	66.1	33.9
7.	Lakhimpur—General	54.6	45.4
8.	United K. & J. Hills		
	—General	67.7	32.3
	Rural	80.2	19.8
	Rural	57.3	42.7
9.	Naga Hills—General	94.1	5.9
	Rural	95.8	4.2
10.	Lushai Hills—General	93.0	7.0
	Rural	95.6	4.4
11.	Garo Hills—General	95.5	4.9
	Rural	95.5	4.9
12.	United Mikir & North Hills—General	94.0	6.0
	Rural	95.2	4.8

The percentage under agriculture is in every single case higher in rural population than in general population with a reverse tendency for non-agriculture. Lakhimpur Rural has the smallest percentage of people depending on agriculture, 57.3 against 89.4 in Nowgong and 88.2 in Goalpara. In non-agricultural Classes the position is exactly the opposite. Lakhimpur Rural has the largest percentage of its rural population dependent on non-agriculture, 42.7 against 1.6 in Nowgong and 11.8 of Goalpara. Among the autonomous districts, excepting the United K. and J. Hills district which has 80.2

of its population dependent on agriculture, all the other four show over 95 per cent, those depending on non-agriculture varying only from 4.9 in Garo Hills to 4.1 in the Naga Hills. In the Naga Tribal Area except a bare 2.4 per cent dependant on non-agriculture, (all of which is recorded under Livelihood Class VIII) all the rest go to Livelihood Class I a simple and effective demonstration of the almost complete dependence of its population on agriculture as its sole means of livelihood. The livelihood pattern of rural population district-wise shows little difference from that of general population. Only, the rural population, as is natural, is slightly more dependent on agriculture than the general population and has opportunities to take to non-agriculture means of livelihood to an even lesser degree.

### 132. Livelihood Pattern of Rural Manipur and Tripura :

Manipur Rural, which as we have seen, includes practically the entire population of the State, is unevenly divided into agriculture and non-agriculture in the ratio of 21:4. Its livelihood pattern is very similar to that of Kamrup district in Assam. 71.5 per cent are in Livelihood Class I, 10.0 in Class II, 0.2 in Class III and 2.0 per cent, in Class IV. The percentages for the four non-agricultural Classes are as follows :—

- 7.0 for Class V
- 4.2 for Class VI
- 0.5 for Class VII
- 4.5 for Class VIII

The livelihood pattern thus shows practically no difference from that of the general population of Manipur.

The same cannot be said, however, about Tripura. Percentage of those dependent on agriculture and non-agriculture in Tripura Rural is 80.7 and 19.3 whereas those for Tripura General is only 75.3 and 24.7 respectively. Thus, Tripura Rural is definitely more dependent on agriculture than Tripura as a whole. 63.6 per cent, are found in Class I against 71.5 in Manipur 9.3 in Class II, 5.2 in Class III, and 1.6 in Class IV. For Classes V, VI, VII, and VIII the percentages are respectively 5.5, 4.9, 0.3 and 9.6.

**133. Districts with large percentage of people in Livelihood Class V (Production other than cultivation) :**

A perusal of column 6 of Subsidiary Table 2.4 relating to Livelihood Class V (production other than cultivation) shows that more than 10 per cent of the population belongs to this livelihood class in the rural areas of the districts of Cachar, Darrang, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur as well as that of the Plains Natural Division. Abor Hills, Tirap Frontier Tract and Balipara Frontier Tract are three areas of the N.E.F.A. which show individually 18.8, 21.1 and 20.8 per cent of the population in this class. The Registrar General desired that these figures should be carefully studied to bring out the significance and the relative importance of the industries which support such a considerable proportion of rural population. The task for me is simple, the explanation is a word of one syllable in practically all cases, **TEA**. Let us examine these districts one by one with the help of Subsidiary Tables 5.7 to 5.12 dealing with the distribution of self-supporting persons engaged in different industries of Livelihood Pattern Class V which throw light on the matter.

From Subsidiary Table 5.7 it is clear that the explanation of this percentage in Darrang as well as in other districts lies in large numbers of people engaged in primary industries not elsewhere specified, *i.e.*, Division O. This division contains as much as 58.3 per cent of the total number of persons engaged in all industries and services in Cachar against 66.9 in Darrang, 77.2 in Sibsagar and 73.7 in Lakhimpur. 97.4 per cent of the entire population of division 'O' is engaged in plantation industries in Cachar. The same percentage for Darrang is 94.2, 99.4 for Lakhimpur and 99.3 for Sibsagar. This furnishes the sole and entirely sufficient explana-

tion. For example, in Lakhimpur out of a total number of 215,504 self-supporting persons dependent on all industries and services, the number in division 'O', *i.e.*, primary industries not elsewhere specified, is as high as 171,985, out of which the number supported by plantation industry is itself 171,179, against 5,384 in petroleum and coal. If this is the pattern of the most industrialised district of Assam, one can easily know what to expect regarding other districts. The same explanation holds good regarding Balipara Frontier Tract also, where out of a total of 1,151 persons employed in all the industries and services, as many as 1,045 are under division 'O' (874 in plantation and 171 in forestry). Balipara Frontier Tract has indeed a number of tea gardens as can be deduced from these figures.

Abor Hills and Tirap Frontier Tract are only two small plains areas of the N.E.F.A. where this general explanation does not apply. In Abor Hills the explanation of the large percentage of people under Livelihood Class V is forestry and wood-cutting which returns as many as 746 out of a total of 920 persons engaged in all industries and services. The abundant forest wealth of the district and its exploitation by the Assam Saw Mills working in the area, not to talk of the Government Forest Department, other concerns as well as individuals, account for this. In Tirap Frontier Tract the sole explanation is the presence of 555 out of a total of 596 persons engaged in all industries and services who are dependent on non-metallic mining and quarrying. As the total numbers involved of the self-supporting persons of all non-agricultural Livelihood Classes are small — only 920 and 596 persons respectively, these can safely be ignored as they do not invalidate our generalisation.

## SECTION VII

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

**134. Assam lives in its villages :**

It is a familiar saying that India lives in her villages. In a predominantly rural country like India, Assam is overwhelmingly a rural State. Out of a total population of 9,043,707 of

Assam, as many as 8,629,289, *i.e.*, 95.4 per cent live in 25,327 villages, against an urban population of 414,418 or a beggarly 4.6 per cent living in 28 towns. Only less than 1 per cent of these villages are very large, *i.e.*, having a population of 5 thousand and above. 7.7 per cent

are large villages with 2.5 thousand persons. Almost exactly half of its entire rural population, viz., 49.9 per cent lives in medium size villages, i.e., those with a population of 500 to 2,000, whereas the remaining 42 per cent lives in clusters of less than 500. In other words over nine tenths of rural Assam lives in villages of small and medium size, while less than one-tenth resides in comparatively larger villages of over 2,000 population. Assam is among the most rural of all States of India, Orissa and Himachal Pradesh, each having 96 per cent of its population in rural areas, being the only States which slightly exceed Assam's rural percentage of 95.4, against an all India average of 83 per cent at the 1951 Census. While in England, 4 out of 5 persons live in towns, in Assam 19 out of every 20 persons live in villages. The percentage of rural population in Canada is only 60 whereas it is 53 in France, 43 in Germany and 35 in Japan. The contrast between Assam and India on the one hand and some other countries of the world on the other is striking enough to give us an idea of the immense importance of the rural population in India and Assam and its welfare in any plans of nation building. The density of rural Assam is 168; in the Assam Plains natural division, the density is as high as 325 but as low as 41 in Assam Hills. The low density of the rural areas of Assam Hills as well as the State as a whole is, as we have already remarked in Chapter 1, entirely due to the nature of hilly terrain and abundance of rivers, marshy tracts and vast areas of forests. For a purely agricultural region like Assam Plains, its density of 325 persons per square mile is definitely very high and is one of the indices of pressure of population on the soil. There is no need to recapitulate how all available lands in the rural areas are already being occupied by the natural growth of indigenous population as well as by the immense numbers of migrants that have poured into Assam during the last 50 years.

We must never lose sight of this fundamental fact that Assam along with the rest of the country inspite of the many vicissitudes, political, administrative, cultural and so on through which they have passed, remains essentially a land of villages. The process of urbanisation, which has been going on ever since the British rule came to be established, is an inevitable phenomenon born out of the con-

tacts India has come to have and an inescapable concomitant of the administrative, economic and commercial system that the British introduced here to suit their needs and requirements. Nevertheless the process of urbanisation has not materially or noticeably affected the distribution of population between the urban and the rural areas. In Assam, more than even in India, the pace of urbanisation, as we have seen in paragraph 116 is extremely slow and gradual viz., an increase of a bare 2.2 per cent in the urban population during the last 30 years.

### 135. Growth of rural population :

The population of rural Assam was 3,724,400 at the beginning of the century, from which it has shot up to the present figure of 8,629,289, an overall increase of over 49 lakhs in 50 years, i.e., a percentage rate of increase of 2.6. No decade shows less than 17.4 per cent rate of increase. This astonishing picture reveals a most continuous and phenomenal growth of population shown by any rural State in India with the sole exception of Travancore-Cochin. The growth during the last two decades exceeds the combined growth of the first three decades of the present century.

### 136. Factors affecting growth :

Of course immigration is the vitally important factor which has brought about this incredible increase of population. We are not in a position to estimate even roughly the net balance of migration either for the last decade or for the period 1931-50 or for that matter even for 1921-30. There is, however, no doubt that out of the net balance of migration for the whole of Assam, which was 509 thousand in 1921-30 and 876 thousand in 1931-50, an overwhelmingly large majority will be automatically accounted for by the rural areas. The large migration streams into Assam, viz., the tea garden labour, Muslim immigration from East Bengal, the Nepalis and the refugees, all are mainly absorbed by the rural areas. Only the refugees prefer to live in towns or their outskirts. Even here the total number of refugees in the rural areas is large. Compared with the vast volume of immigration, emigration from the rural areas is practically insignificant, only a small trickle going into urban areas. It need not be emphasized that immigration outside the State is entirely insignificant. Natural

increase plays a secondary part in accounting for the growth of population of rural Assam just as it does for Assam as a whole. However, there is a distinct trend for both the birth rates and the death rates to decline.

### 137. Future trends for 1951-60 :

The future trends regarding the population of rural Assam at the end of the present decade are in the direction of an accelerated population growth, similar to those we have examined for General population for the last half century. The difficulties in forecasting the future population growth in the case of rural population increase further on account of the probable future greater outflow of the rural population into the urban areas. On the assumption that tea garden labour immigration, Muslim immigration from East Bengal and the Nepalese will continue to contribute substantially to the population growth, along with the uncertain factor of the influx of refugees which will be a function of the economic and political equation in East Pakistan, we are on the safe ground in looking forward to another large increment in the rural population of Assam in the coming decade.

### 138. The economic outlook :

76.5 per cent of the rural population of Assam belongs to the agricultural livelihood classes; only about 23.5 per cent of it depends upon industries, commerce, transport and miscellaneous sources. As the tea industry is mainly agricultural in its nature, if we take out about 10 per cent dependent on tea industry from Livelihood Class V and from non-agriculture, and add it on to agriculture, the percentage of those dependent on agriculture would actually amount to over 86 per cent, whereas that of those dependent on non-agricultural livelihoods will be reduced to near about 14 per cent. It is not now at all difficult to realise how rural Assam is almost entirely dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. It is also crystal clear that the growth of alternative occupations either in the rural or even in the towns has not been commensurate with the growth of rural population. The nature of the non-agricultural activities in which the people of rural Assam are engaged can be judged from the distribution of 10,000 self-supporting persons of all industries and services

given in Table 2.21 below which is derived from Subsidiary Table 5.7 in Part I-B of the Report.

TABLE 2.21

*Distribution of 10,000 self-supporting persons of all industries and services in the rural areas of Assam, its Natural Divisions and Tripura*

	Rural areas of			
	Assam	Assam Plains Division	Assam Hills Division	Tripura
(1) Total number of self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services	847,757	793,773	43,767	32,448
(2) Number per 10,000 self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services, engaged in division				
0—Primary Industries	6,273	6,535	2,076	2,005
1—Mining and Quarrying	62	49	277	-
2—Processing and Manufacture — Food-stuffs, Textile, Leather and products thereof	224	217	339	827
3—Processing and Manufacture — Metals, Chemicals and Products thereof	139	141	117	113
4—Processing and Manufacture—Not elsewhere specified	356	348	482	395
5—Constructions and Utilities	98	95	151	7
6—Commerce	872	857	1,128	2,433
7—Transport, Storage and Communications	340	330	493	133

	Rural areas of			
	Assam	Assam Plains Division	Assam Hills Division	Tri-pura
8—Health, Education and Public Administration	376	266	2,167	1,003
9—Services not elsewhere specified	1,255	1,162	2,770	3,079
All Divisions	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

A glance at the Table clearly shows the overwhelming importance of Division 'O' i.e., Primary Industries not elsewhere specified, in which are engaged over 3/5ths (63 per cent), of all self-supporting persons in all industries and services in Assam. This group of industries includes stock raising, rearing of small animals and insects, plantations, forestry, wood cutting, hunting and fishing. Subsidiary Table 5.8A given in Part I-B of the Report shows that amongst the persons engaged in primary industries not elsewhere specified, more than 19 out of every 20 (96.1 per cent), are engaged in plantation industries, only about 1.7 per cent are engaged in fishing, whereas all other subdivisions together account for less than 2.5 per cent of the total number in this Division. The overwhelming importance of the tea industry to Rural Assam is thus made crystal clear. About 1/5th (12.6 per cent), of the people are engaged in services not elsewhere specified. This Division Services otherwise unclassified forms by far the large portion, being nearly two-thirds, whereas another 1/5th are engaged in domestic services. The only other significant sub-division in this group is religious, charitable and welfare services, as will be obvious from a perusal of Subsidiary Table 5.17A given in Part II-B of this Report.

Amongst the 8.7 per cent of persons engaged in commerce in the rural areas, shown in Table 2.21 above, more than half (50.7 per cent) are engaged in retail trade otherwise unspecified, as will be seen from a perusal of the Subsidiary

Table 5.14A in Part I-B of the Report. Over hundred (34.8 per cent), are engaged in retail trade in food-stuffs (including beverages and the narcotics), whereas 6.2 per cent are engaged in retail trade in textiles and leather goods. It is interesting to observe that of the people engaged in Commerce, less than 1 per cent (9.9 per cent), are engaged in money lending and banking.

Other non-agricultural livelihoods of Rural Assam deserve scant notice. 3.6 per cent are engaged in processing and manufacture not elsewhere specified, while a slightly high percentage of 3.8 are found under health, education, and public administration; transport accounting for another 3.4. Construction and utilities and mining and quarrying are among the insignificant non-agricultural livelihoods in Assam, each being less than 1 per cent of all self-supporting persons engaged in all industries and services.

### 139. Imperative need for rural reconstruction:

Diversion of the surplus rural population to large-scale industries is, therefore, one of the pressing necessities of the State vividly brought out by our study of the census figures on the economic classification of our rural population. A concerted drive to tackle the rural problem on all fronts is the imperative need of the hour, as evidenced from the above economic factors as well as the conditions of our Indian villages of today described in an earlier paragraph.

As the well-known authors of "The Indian Rural Problem"\* observe: "It is not difficult to say what the Indian Rural Problem is. At bottom it is none other than that of raising the standard of life of the rural masses. During the last twenty-five years, there has been a considerable growth of industries in India, but this has made hardly any impression on our standard of life, more especially in the rural areas. Industrialism in this country has been an exotic growth, super-imposed upon an unprepared and undeveloped economic structure. Our industrial progress has been slow and lopsided; the few large-scale industries we have are concentrated in the cities. We have failed to

\* Manilal B. Nanavati and J. J. Anjaria—The Indian Rural Problem—pp. xi, xii and xv.

develop the basic and key industries which are the very corner-stone of the industrial edifice in the advanced countries of the world, and the need for developing small-scale and cottage industries has been realised only lately and slowly. As to agriculture, it remains as backward and primitive as ever. The productivity of agriculture has not increased; in certain respects, it is possible, it has actually decreased. As India lives in her villages, and agriculture is the very backbone of her economic life, we must devote all our efforts to solve the rural problem. The objective is to increase the income of the rural population so as to improve its standards of nutrition, sanitation, housing and education and this presupposes certain social, political and administrative changes. For one who knows our rural life and its problems, this is no easy task. Agriculture, it has often been said is not, for our farmers, a business proposition, but a way of life. A way of life cannot be changed by half-measures and piecemeal efforts. It presupposes an all-round, well-planned and co-ordinated effort on the part of the authorities responsible for the well-being of the people.

"The root cause of the low productivity of Indian agriculture is our failure to apply modern science to it, but before this could be done, extensive measures for the reform of the land system are necessary. The great economic transformation in European countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was brought about by the adoption of a new system of crop rotation, better methods of sowing and reaping, the use of chemical manures, and, in general, the application of new scientific knowledge to all the related aspects of the economy. In the process, new economic institutions developed and the entire way of life was altered. In this transformation, the State played a prominent part. Behind what we call the Industrial Revolution, there was not merely a new technique, but also a new spirit, a spirit of innovation, adventure and experiment. A number of factors, political and social, conditioned the manner in which and the tempo with which the transformation took place in different countries, but, in essence, the motive force behind it was the same, a desire to go forward to raise the standard of life so as to turn the economic struggle from one for bare existence into one for a competence and a surplus.

"The peculiar circumstances under which industrialism was introduced into this country generated, on the other hand, a spirit of defeatism and despair among the people. They could not comprehend these 'miracles' of science. While the railway and telegraph brought them face to face with world forces, their technique, outlook and mode of life remained generally unaffected. The old balance between agriculture and industry was destroyed; the villager found his subsidiary industries decaying; there appeared nothing in their place he could take up, no alternative avenues for employment. The result was more and more ruralisation, more and more dependence on agriculture, more and more pressure on the soil. A few cities and towns grew richer, but the rural areas generally sank into greater poverty, from which there seemed to be no escape. If it is true to say "Industrialise or Perish", it is equally important to remember that we have to modernise, rehabilitate, revitalise and rebuild our rural economy in harmony with the needs of the economy as a whole."

The rishi-poet Rabindranath in his own felicitous language has remarked:—

"Villages are like women. In their keeping is the cradle of the race. It is the function of the village like that of woman to provide people with their elemental needs, with food and joy, with the simple poetry of life, and with those ceremonies of beauty which the village spontaneously produces and in which she finds delight. But when constant strain is put upon her through the extortionate claims of ambition; when her resources are exploited through the excessive stimulus of temptation, then she becomes poor in life and her mind becomes dull and uncreative. From the time-honoured position of the wedded partner of the city she is degraded to that of the maidservant while in its turn, the city in its intense egotism and pride remains unconscious of the devastation constantly worked upon the very source of its life, health and joy."\*

The poet's insight and vision have been translated into our noble Constitution which guarantees certain fundamental rights to the

\* Quoted in Kuryenson—Rural Reconstruction, Principles and Methods.

citizens of India and enunciates the directive principles of State policy which 'are fundamental in the governance of the country'. The Constitution lays down that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice, social, economic, and political, shall prevail in all the institutions of the national life and shall direct its policy towards securing, among other things, (a) that the citizens, men and women equal, have the right, to an adequate means of livelihood; (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good; (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment and (d) that all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, get work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life.

The report of the Grow Food Inquiry Committee presided over by Shri V. T. Krishnamachari, Member of the Planning Commission points out how India, as a welfare State, is thus facing one of the world's most difficult human problems. For the betterment of rural life—95 per cent of the population of Assam lives in villages (the percentage in the case of India being far lower viz., 83),—is essentially a human problem. This is the tremendous task of creating among sixty million families living in villages "a burning desire to change their old-time outlook and arouse enthusiasm in them for new knowledge and new ways of life"—to create in them a burning desire for a higher standard of living—"a will to live better". The questions for which Governments should find an answer are—how to awaken such enthusiasm and maintain it at a high level and how to lift the people out of themselves and enlist their active interest and support in the task of bettering their own condition. The agriculturists must be made to feel how vital is the part they have to play in the nation's economy and that there is, on the side of the Government a realisation of this and a determination by carefully planned living."

#### 140. Community Development Projects :

Community Development is the method and Rural Extension the agency through which the

Planning Commission now seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages. The reform envisaged presupposes a reversal of our administrative policies, a shifting of emphasis from the accentuating urban bias in Governmental policies to a bias in favour of rural areas, a purposeful and intensive effort and drive to largely go back to what has been going on for the last one century or more. The reason is simple, as Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya observes, "**Rural reconstruction is a vast subject, endless and fathomless, while its problems are countless in number as well as protean in forms.** It requires touch with the rural life of the nation as well as the inner working of a Government for one to be able to deal with them". The object of any plan of rural reconstruction should be, in the words of Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, wellknown as one of the trusted disciples of Gandhiji, "to organise the villages for a happier, more prosperous and fuller life in which the individual villager will have the opportunity to develop both as an individual and as a unit of a well intergrated society. This has to be done by using local initiative and local resources to the utmost extent possible in the economic, political and social fields of reconstruction on co-operative lines. Self-reliant, self-dependent and properly organised life in the villages and regions will thus be the aim of rural development work".

An immediate and considerable increase in agricultural production by carrying the fruits of science and research right to the door of the villagers instead of allowing them to be buried either in research institutions or official files, reports and memoranda, and a vast increase in employment in the villages, mainly through providing subsidiary occupations by means of cottage industries will be its two main programmes; simultaneously an attack on the rural diseases, ill-health and lack of sanitation, illiteracy, lack of roads, should be launched, without neglecting cultural and recreational fields to infuse a new joy into their humdrum joyless and glamourless existence. Government, of course, should do everything it can by way of providing necessary funds, technical advice, guidance and personnel as well as essential supplies and equipment. But its principal objective should be to harness the vast amount of unutilised man power and



resources in villages for the benefit of a part or whole of the community and thus to help the villagers to help themselves by means of voluntary co-operation under the stimulus of local initiative and leadership. Such an approach alone can hope to generate those vast unforeseen and latent forces and potentialities which lie hidden in the vast mass of our rural population and which can be expected to revolutionise village life in the country in the near future.

The close—nay almost inseparable connection between rural reconstruction and the extension of the activities of a well founded co-operative movement will be evident from the above enunciation of basic principles underlying rural reconstruction. "The theory of co-operation", as enunciated in the MacLagan Committee Report, "is very briefly that an isolated and powerless individual can, by association with others and by moral development and mutual support, obtain, in his own degree, the material advantages available to wealthy or powerful persons, and thereby develop himself to the fullest extent of his natural abilities. By the union of forces material advancement is secured, and by united action self-reliance is fostered, and it is from the interaction of these influences that it is hoped to attain the effective realization of the higher and more prosperous standard of life which has been characterized as "better business, better farming and better living". The Royal Commission on Agriculture (1926-27) also emphasise the role of the co-operative movement in rural development. They observe: "It is now accepted that co-operative principles can be used in overcoming most of the obstacles to progress in rural communities. Wherever agriculture is the predominant industry co-operation is coming to be regarded as the natural basis of economic, social and educational development and India is no exception." When a scheme of rural development is proposed to be undertaken not merely as a side-show of some humdrum Governmental activity but has as its fundamental objective the evocation of the spirit of self-help and self-reliance among the people themselves, the beneficial contribution that co-operation can make to this end must be ungrudgingly recognised. The same Commission also pertinently remark that "where the problems of half a million villages are in

question it becomes at once evident that no official organisation can possibly hope to reach every individual in those villages. To do this the people must be organised to help themselves and their local organisations must be grouped into larger unions. Until a machinery has been built up to convey to every village whatever the different expert departments have to send it. Only through the medium of co-operative associations can the teaching of the expert be brought to multitudes who could never be reached individually".

Already 55 community development projects based on and embodying these sound and basic principles have been inaugurated in every single State of India on the 2nd October 1952, the auspicious birth date of the Father of our nation. In Assam a separate Development (Community Projects) Department has been formed with a Director of Community Projects as its head, who is also ex-officio Secretary to the Government for the Department. Assam has been so far assigned two full Projects and two development Blocks as follows:—

- (1) Cachar District (Sonai-Silchar-Hailakandi Tehsils).
- (2) Darrang District (Mouzas-Kakoo-Harisanga-Ambagaon-Barsilajhar-Orang-Dokiajuli Tehsils).
- (3) Garo Hills—Goalpara Area (one Development Block).
- (4) Golaghat-Mikir Hills Area (One Development Block).

The neighbouring Part C States of Manipur and Tripura also have been assigned one Community Development Block each; in Manipur the Thoubal Tehsil and in Tripura in Nutan-Haveli and Agartala area. Tremendous enthusiasm and expectations have been aroused in the entire country for the success of these Projects. It is hoped that these Community Development Projects will usher in a new peaceful revolution in the countryside for the betterment, uplift and all-round progress of over five lakhs of villages of India. Assam, with its age-old traditions of co-operation and community efforts in the religious, cultural and economic fields, both in its hills and valleys, is bound not merely to give a good account of itself but lead the rest of the country in this colossal national undertaking.

## CHAPTER III

# URBAN POPULATION

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 141. Introductory:

This chapter deals with the urban population *i.e.* the population living in urban areas treated as towns as distinguished from villages dealt with in the previous chapter. Hence this chapter should be read along with it to appreciate the problem in the proper prospective. I have already discussed some aspects of urban life while contrasting the same with those of rural population. This will not be repeated now and the chapter will be confined to a treatment of the issues yet remaining to be dealt with.

Many towns of Assam would hardly be recognised as such by dwellers in the great cities of other parts of India or Europe or America. Fear of earthquakes restricts buildings generally to one storey only and the need for economy and heavy rainfall induce a wide use of corrugated iron sheets for roofs and sometimes for walls, fences also. Paved streets with rows of high buildings, electric trams, museums, statues of great men are not to be seen. There are many towns without filtered and piped water-supply or electric lights, just over-grown villages with some administrative importance, say, the headquarters of a thana, revenue circle, sub-division or district. Undeveloped though most of these towns are, they offer greater amenities of life than the villages *e.g.* educational and medical facilities, scope for non-agricultural occupations not

merely in services, business and commerce or learned professions but also for other miscellaneous sources like domestic services or daily, casual labour of various kinds. Hence the need for separate treatment of the census statistics of the urban areas, which is of great significance in demographic studies. The growth of population is vitally affected by the physical environment in which people live, the available means of livelihood and facilities available for the education of the population. In respect of all these matters there is a significant difference between rural and urban areas.

#### 142. Definition of towns in Assam:

For census purposes a "town" in Assam was defined as:—

- (1) Every Municipal area;
- (2) All Civil Lines not within Municipal Limits;
- (3) Every Cantonment;
- (4) Every other continuous collection of houses inhabited by not less than 5,000 persons which the State Census Superintendent may decide to treat as a town for census purpose, having regard to the character of the population, the importance of the place as centre of trade and to the fact that it is undesirable to treat as towns over-grown villages which have no urban characteristics.

Small towns in Assam correspond to the old "unions" of the Bengal Municipal Act V of 1876; they are towns which, though not of sufficient importance to be granted the full status of municipalities, have been given a considerable measure of local self-government.

Under (2) there is no entry.

Under (3), the only Cantonment in Assam is Shillong, all other Cantonments having been "decantonized". Neither Shillong, nor its cantonment, it may be noted, includes Happy Valley which is a station for military troops outside the municipal and cantonment areas of Shillong, and the population of which is included in that of the rural areas.

Under (4) Aijal has been included for the first time as a new town on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Lushai Hills (now called Deputy Commissioner, Lushai Hills). Aijal is the headquarters of the Lushai Hills District, inhabited by more than 5,000 people and has a sort of municipal administration under which a kind of tax, called personal residence sur-charge at the rate of Rs. 3 per annum for every person of 18 years of age and above is collected. As I write, Aijal is to have a Town Committee under notification No. TAD/LF/6/51/68, dated the 6th October, 1952.

In the flyleaf of main Table A-V, 4 towns with the livelihood break-up have been given. They are Badarpur (5,893), Pandu (18,096), North Gauhati (4,915) and Digboi (23,791), involving a total population of 52,695. Badarpur is an important railway junction in Assam, being the terminus of the Lumding-Badarpur Hill section; so also is Pandu, which is a ferry station, there being no bridge over the Brahmaputra. Pandu has greatly increased in importance and population during the past decade as it became the headquarters of the Assam Railway after partition. The Railway has spent vast sums of money to build the colony for its employees. There is a proposal to give a Town Committee to North Gauhati. Digboi is an important industrial centre in Assam, being the headquarters of the Assam Oil Company.

There is yet another class for Assam which comprises places in the hill districts and frontier tracts which have a local fund of their own as well as some form of municipal administration, and are of sufficient importance to be treated as

towns, e.g., Sadiya Shillong Cantonment and Kohima. It is under this special dispensation that a place like Halfong now situated in the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, with a population of barely 2,168 persons, is included in the list of towns.

The limit of 5,000 which has generally been adopted is arbitrary, though perhaps not unreasonable; it is very rarely that one comes across a place with a smaller population which really deserves to be treated as a town. A smaller population will not be able to afford those civic amenities, e.g., medical, educational and recreational facilities or some form of municipal administration to provide them, which are the main criteria which differentiate it from the inhabitants of rural areas. These criteria also imply preponderance of non-agricultural classes over the agricultural in towns. Naturally enough in a town there will be many persons who exist to provide, so to speak, the urban amenities, resulting in their occupation becoming largely non-agricultural. In Madras there are as many as 75 towns at the present census in which the agricultural population exceeds the non-agricultural! Compare it with Assam, where no single case of this nature has been treated as a town. In all towns non-agricultural classes invariably exceed the agricultural ones. Yet there are nine towns out of a total of 28 in Assam, with a population under 5,000.

#### 143. Reference to Statistics :

The general population statistics in respect of the towns will be found in the following tables given in Part II-A of the Census Report :—

- (1) Table A-III—Towns and villages classified by population.
- (2) Table A-IV—Towns classified by population with variation since 1901.
- (3) Table A-V—Towns arranged territorially with population by livelihood classes.

These tables give a complete picture of the growth of the towns in the State and of the broad economic classification of the people in each town. In addition to the above general population tables, statistics about the urban areas in each district in respect of the detailed economic classification, as well as in respect of social and cultural data, would be found in Parts II-B and II-C of this Report. Detailed statistics

about the municipal wards of the towns in respect of livelihood classes of the people and their literacy would be found in the Primary Census Abstracts given in the District Census Hand-Books.

In Part I-B of the Report, the following Subsidiary Tables have been given :—

- (1) Subsidiary Table 3.1—Distribution of population between towns.
- (2) Subsidiary Table 3.2—Variation and density of urban population.
- (3) Subsidiary Table 3.3—Mean decennial growth rates during three decades—urban population.

- (4) Subsidiary Table 3.4—Towns classified by population.
- (5) Subsidiary Table 3.5—Omitted because there are no cities.
- (6) Subsidiary Table 3.6—Number per 1,000 of the general population and of each livelihood class who live in towns.
- (7) Subsidiary Table 3.7—Livelihood pattern of urban population; and
- (8) Subsidiary Table 3.8—Immigration into urban areas.

In addition to the above Subsidiary Tables which will be reviewed in this Chapter an additional Subsidiary Table gives displaced persons in each town of Assam, Manipur and Tripura.

## SECTION II

### GENERAL DISTRIBUTION AND DISTRIBUTION AMONG TOWNS CLASSIFIED BY SIZE OF URBAN POPULATION

#### 144. General Distribution of Urban Population in Assam and Natural Divisions :

TABLE 3.1

#### *Distribution of Urban Population*

State/ Natural Divi- sion	Area in square miles		No. of towns	Urban Population		
	Total	Urban		Persons	Males	Females
Assam	51,415	52.6	28	414,418	246,236	168,182
Assam Plains	23,033	37.2	22	337,619	202,917	134,702
Assam Hills	28,382	15.4	6	76,799	43,319	33,480

In the censused area of 51,415 square miles, the towns cover an area of 52.6 square miles only, (37.2 in Assam Plains and 15.4 in Assam Hills). The urban population of Assam is only 414,418 (337,619 in Assam Plains and 76,799 in Assam Hills) in a total population of 9,043,707. Thus only a small fraction of the total population of Assam, (4.6 per cent), lives in towns, the overwhelming majority of 95.4 per cent living in its villages. Table 2.4 given in Chapter II shows up clearly how this is one of the lowest percentages of all States of India; India as a whole has 17 per cent of its population living in towns and cities.

Assam is a purely agricultural State; its largest and most important industry, tea cultivation, is mainly agricultural and tea gardens with their own local markets and the resident traders tend to prevent rather than assist the formation of new urban areas. Along with Orissa, (4 per cent only), it is the least urbanised among Part 'A' States of India. In the whole of India hilly Himachal Pradesh is the only other State which has such a low percentage as 4. Insignificant as the number of urban population in Assam is, it constitutes an appreciable advance over the 1941 position when it had only 249,766 persons in urban areas constituting 3.7 per cent of the total population. During the past decade urban population has thus registered an overall growth of 164,000 which exceeds the combined growth in urban population of all the four previous decades! In spite of this seemingly tremendous growth, the percentage of urban population in Assam is only 4.6, almost one-fourth of the proportion for all India. The urban population forms 4.3 per cent of that of Assam Plains while 6.2 in Assam Hills. This at the first sight may appear a little surprising as normally we should expect a larger total as

well as percentage of urban population in the Plains Division rather than in the Hills. The higher percentage of Assam Hills Division is easily accounted for by the presence within its boundaries of Shillong, the capital of the State with its population of 58,512 including the Cantonment. Due to Shillong, the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District shows 16.1 per cent urban population, larger than that of any other district in Assam. The percentage of urban population does not vary much in the Plains Districts; it is the largest 5.5 in Cachar against only 2.5 in Darrang. In the Hills Division the percentage in Mishmi Hills is very high, viz., 15.7, which is due to the fact that the population of only the plains portion was regularly censused and of it Sadiya population forms such a considerable fraction. There is no urban population at all in the Garo Hills while Lushai Hills, Naga Hills and the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills have 3.5, 2.0 and 1.3 per cent, respectively. Except Mishmi Hills no area of the N. E. F. A. has any urban population.

Of the total population of 337,619 in Assam Plains urban, Kamrup comes first with a total of 73,880, Cachar second with 61,376 and Lakhimpur third 56,429, Darrang having the lowest 22,451. Thus Kamrup alone has more than one-fifth of the entire urban population of the Plains Division. Again three-fourths of the urban population of Assam Hills is in the United K. and J. Hills District, which alone accounts for 58,512 out of 76,799.

#### 145. General Distribution of Urban Population in Manipur and Tripura :

As we have seen Manipur is almost cent per cent rural. Only 2,862 population of Imphal town is treated as urban at the present census. Manipur has barely one half per cent of its population as urban and the remaining 99.5 per cent is rural. If the practice of the past censuses were followed the valley of Imphal with its present population position would have actually blossomed forth into a city. In fact the Registrar General did treat it as one on mere population basis; but later it was deleted from the list of cities of India on my recommendation. Imphal was so far treated as a town because of its large population, and also because it was the capital of the former Manipur State and the seat of the Mahafaja. It is rather

a collection of village group round the palace of the ruler, with a large percentage of agricultural population. Hence at the present census only a fraction has been treated as urban."

**Tripura :** Tripura has only one town, Agartala, with a population of 42,595 out of a total of 639,029 i.e., 6.7 per cent. This is a considerable advance over the 1941 population which was only 17,693. The urban population of Tripura has increased to two and a half times its 1941 figure. The growth in the past decade is 24,902 greatly in excess of the combined growth of Agartala during the first 4 decades of the century.

#### 146. Urban Density :

The density of Urban Assam is very low, 7,886 persons per square mile as compared to those in other States of India. The urban density in Assam Hills is even lower, 5,003 per square mile, while in the plains it is higher than the State average viz., 9,076 persons per square mile. The urban density is highest in Kamrup, 12,111, followed by Cachar, 12,035. The least congested urban area is that of Sibsagar with a density of only 5,313, which supports the largest percentage of urban population (14.3), of any district of Assam. The reason is obvious. The density of Shillong with its Cantonment is the highest in Assam, 12,318. The density of the urban areas of Naga Hills and the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills is just over a thousand which is lower than that of some rural areas of India.

#### 146A. Average population per town in Assam :

This is only 14,807, another measure of urban density; for the Plains it is 15,346 and for the Hills 12,800. The plains average would have been much higher but for Shillong which is situated in the Hills. The average population per town is a purely artificial concept and not much store should be laid by it e.g. the average population per town in the United K. and J. Hills, is 29,256, which neither resembles that of Shillong (53,756), nor its Cantonment, (4,756).

Towns in Assam as in the rest of the country have grown up in a most haphazard manner which accounts for the presence of greatly congested localities in some areas, though they could easily afford to spread themselves out. They are nothing more than a conglomeration

of buildings with the administrative quarters as a centre; extensions are made from time to time in a most unplanned manner. As Chandrasekhar says, "if town planning means basically the equitable distribution of the available land according to the various needs of the community including the provision for residential and industrial areas, space for broad thoroughfares, dustless streets and avenues, gardens, parks and pools and civic amenities like protected water-supply, hygienic sewage disposal and adequate lightening no civic or Provincial Government has seriously thought of it". Even the necessity of controlling the growth of towns is yet to be recognised by the State. There is no Town Planning Act, in Assam nor any Town Planning Expert or department in existence.

#### 147. 6 Classes of Towns :

Towns in Assam have been divided into 6 classes according to their population as shown in Table 3.2 below which gives the population actual and percentage residing in each class of town.

TABLE 3.2

*Population, Actual and Percentage, in different Class of Towns*

Class of towns	No. of towns in the Class	Population of towns in the Class	Percentage of Population of the class to the total urban population
I 100,000 and above	nil	...	...
II 50,000 to 100,000	1	53,756	13.0
III 20,000 to 50,000	6	187,846	45.3
IV 10,000 to 20,000	7	102,479	24.7
V 5,000 to 10,000	5	36,146	8.7
VI Below 5,000	9	34,191	8.3

Table 3.2 shows that there is no city in Assam and only one town of population of 53,756, which is Shillong, the capital of the State. At the previous censuses the number in both categories was also nil. Class II contains 13 per cent of the total of urban population. The urban population is concentrated in the medium size towns of Assam. Classes III and IV which together account for 70 per cent of the entire urban population. Categories V and VI contain only 8.7 and 8.3 per cent of the urban population.

#### 147A. Class III 20,000 to 50,000 :

Towns of the size of 20,000 and over are 6 :— Gauhati (43,615), Dibrugarh (37,991), Silchar (34,059), Nowgong (28,257), Dhubri (22,787), and Barpeta (21,137), in the descending order of population. This group contains a total population of 187,846 i.e., 45.3 per cent of the urban population. In the Assam Plains, towns of this size constitute 55.6 per cent of the urban population. There are no towns of this size in Darrang and Sibsagar. Excepting Shillong, which has within its limits 70 per cent of the total urban population of Assam Hills, there is no other town in Assam Hills in this group.

#### 147B. Class IV—10,000 to 20,000 :

This is the second largest urban group in Assam with 24.7 per cent of the urban population. It consists of 7 towns only, viz., Karimganj (19,098), Tezpur (18,880), Jorhat (16,164), Lumding (15,278), Tinsukia (12,245), Sibsagar (10,622), and Goalpara (10,192), all arranged according to their rank. Goalpara sneaks into this group due to the presence of mere additional 192 souls. Assam Hills Division is entirely devoid of any towns of this size which are solely confined to Assam Plains. Darrang and Sibsagar which had no towns in the group 20,000-50,000 have the overwhelming percentage of their urban population 84.1 and 68.1, respectively, in this group. There is no town of this size in Kamrup.

#### 147C. Class V—5,000 to 10,000 :

This is the fourth-ranking group in Assam containing 8.7 per cent of the urban population. It constitutes only 7.2 per cent of Assam Plains but 15.6 in Assam Hills. Only 5 towns are in this group :—

Golaghat (8,283), Hailakandi (8,219), Gauripur (7,650), Aijal (6,950), and Sadiya (5,044).

Sadiya just manages to get itself included here due to an excess of 44 persons. Lakhimpur, Nowgong, Darrang and Kamrup have no towns of this size which are found in the districts of Sibsagar, Goalpara and Cachar forming 20.1, 18.8 and 13.4 per cent of their urban population.

#### 147D. Class VI—Under 5,000 :

The towns of the smallest size, namely under 5,000, contain only one third of the total number of towns in Assam but only 8.3 per cent of

the total population, thus forming the smallest group. Towns of this size contain 6.9 per cent of the urban population of Assam Plains but 14.4 in Assam Hills. Shillong Cantonment, (4,756), is the largest town in this group, followed by Kohima (4,125), and Halfong in the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills (2,168); the latter has the smallest population of any town in Assam. It has a small town committee with the Sub-Divisional Officer, North Cachar Hills Sub-Division, as the ex-officio Chairman and is the headquarters of the sub-division, which ex-

plain its title to be treated as a town. Towns of this lowest size, under 5,000, are absent in Nowgong, Goalpara and Cachar. Mangaldai (3,571), Palasbari (4,706), Nalbari (4,422), Nazira (4,250), Doom Dooma (3,099), and North Lakhimpur (3,095), complete the list of Assam towns. With the additional population of 52,595 *i.e.*, the population of North Gauhati, Pandu, Badarpur and Digbi, taken into consideration, the total urban population of Assam will rise to 467,013 *i.e.*, 5.16 per cent of the total population.

### SECTION III

#### GROWTH

##### 148. Variation in urban population during the last 50 years :

While considering the growth of urban population it should be remembered that the numbers of towns often vary from census to census. Certain places which were recorded as villages at one census have been treated as towns at the subsequent ones. We shall, therefore, consider the growth of urban areas on the basis of the census irrespective of the individual places within these areas. Later on the growth of individual towns in each Natural Division will be reviewed.

TABLE 3.3  
*Variation in Urban Population (1901-50)*

Year	Assam	Urban Population—	
		Assam Plains	Assam Hills
1901	89,788	77,074	12,714
1911	108,978	92,916	16,062
1921	147,100	123,517	23,583
1931	191,461	157,796	33,665
1941	249,766	204,540	45,226
1951	414,418	337,619	76,799

Table 3.3 gives the variation in urban population of Assam and its Natural Divisions for the last 50 years. The urban population of Assam which was less than a lakh at the beginning of the century (89,788), surpassed 100,000 in 1911, reaching nearly a lakh and a half in 1921. It was 1.9 lakhs in 1931, 2.5 in 1941 and 4.1 in 1951.

The urban population of Assam Plains begins with 77,074 in 1901 rising to over a lakh and a half in 1931 and 3.4 lakhs today. In Assam Hills the urban population at the beginning of the century was a little over 12,500. In 1941 it had yet to reach half a lakh. In 1951 it is just a little over three quarters of a lakh.

##### 149. Growth of Urban Population in last 50 years :

Table 3.4 given below gives the growth, total and percentage, of the urban population in Assam and its Natural Divisions :—

TABLE 3.4  
*Growth of Urban Population in Assam and its Natural Divisions (1901-50)*

Period	Assam		Assam Plains		Assam Hills	
	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent	Total	Per cent
1901-10	19,190	21.4	15,842	20.5	3,348	26.3
1911-20	38,122	35.0	30,601	32.9	7,521	46.8
1921-30	44,361	30.1	34,279	27.7	10,082	42.7
1931-40	58,305	30.4	46,744	29.6	11,561	34.3
1941-50	164,652	65.9	133,079	65.1	31,573	69.8
1901-50	324,630	361.3	260,545	238.0	64,085	104.0

The total growth in urban population in last 50 years is 324,630, (*i.e.*, 361.3 per cent over the 1901 population), out of which the Plains Division accounts for 260,545 and the Hills 64,085 only. Thus the Plains Division containing 80 per cent of the urban population of Assam ac-



counts for the same percentage of total growth. The growth in the last decade was to the tune of 164,652 in Assam out of which the Plains show up 133,079, *i.e.*, slightly more than four-fifth of the entire growth, while the remaining 31,573 or about one-fifth of the total growth was in the Hills. The figures for the previous decade tell a similar tale. Out of the total growth of 58,305 in Assam 46,744, *i.e.*, 80.6 per cent was in the Plains and 11,561, *i.e.*, 19.4 per cent in the Hills.

The urban population of Assam Plains shows a total increase of 260,545, *i.e.*, an increase of 238.0 per cent in the first half of the century. The total increase was only 15,842 in the first decade of the century while it was nearly half a lakh in 1931-41 and more than a lakh and a quarter in 1941-51. In Assam Hills the increase was barely 3,000 in the first decade of the century, about 10,000 in each of the two decades of 1921-31 and 1931-41 and over 31,000 in 1941-51. It has shown a total increase of 64,085, *i.e.*, 404 per cent. This exceedingly high percentage rate of growth as contrasted with 238 per cent in Assam Plains and 361 per cent for the State as a whole is due to the fact that urban population of Assam Hills stood at such a low figure of 12,714 in 1901, that even a small overall increase of 64,085 persons gives a proportionately larger percentage increase.

#### 150. Percentage rate of growth of urban population :

It will be seen from Subsidiary Table 3.2 that the percentage increase in urban population of Assam is 65.9 for the decade 1941-51 against 30.4 and 30.2 respectively for 1931-41 and 1921-30. In the Natural Divisions, the increase was 65.1 in 1941-50 in Assam Plains and 69.8 in Assam Hills. Thus, the percentage rate of increase in both the Natural Divisions is not dissimilar, though the total numbers involved are very different. Urban Assam increased at 21.4 in the first decade of the century. The second decade showed a rate nearly 1½ times as much, 35 from which, it fell to 30 in the two subsequent decades. In the decade 1941-51, increase has been at the unprecedented rate of 65.9 per cent. Assam Plains faithfully reproduce the same pattern in percentage rate of growth with a 20 per cent increase in the

first decade of the century and 65 per cent in the previous decade. All along, Assam Hills show a greater percentage of rate of increase than Assam Plains, 26.3 per cent in 1901-1911 to 69.8 per cent in 1941-51. It is interesting to note that the total growth in the present decade greatly exceeds the combined growth of urban population in all the four previous decades, not merely in Assam, but separately in Natural Divisions also. The same tendency is revealed by individual towns as we shall see later on.

#### 150A. Mean Decennial Growth Rate :

Subsidiary Table 3.3 showing the Mean Decennial Growth rate during three decades in urban population, is restricted only for Assam Plains Division, for which alone vital statistics are available. The Mean Decennial growth rate for 1941-51 is 46.5 per cent against 24.1 per cent in 1931-41 and an identical rate in 1921-31.

#### 150B. Percentage increase of urban population in individual districts :

A glance at Subsidiary Table 3.2 reveals that the percentage rate of increase is very uneven among different districts. Nowgong shows 158.6 per cent increase and Cachar 123.2 but it is only 33.5 in Kamrup and 39.8 in Sibsagar. Only the Mishmi Hills (which means Sadiya alone) shows a percentage increase of 145.3. The urban population of Kamrup, which now shows the lowest percentage increase, returned the highest rate 41.8, in 1931-41. The United K. and J. Hills shows a percentage rate of increase of 53.2, while Naga Hills 17.6.

#### 151. Growth of towns of different classes :

Table A-IV shows towns classified by population with variations since 1901; Subsidiary Table 3.4 gives the percentage rate of increase in the totals of each class. None of the States of Assam, Manipur and Tripura has any city within their frontiers. Hence, Class I is conspicuous by its absence. If past practice were followed, Imphal would have been treated as a city at the present census with a population of over 137,000. The idea, however, was ultimately dropped as we have seen before.

The urban population of Assam has increased at the rate of 65.9 per cent in the past decade against 30.4 in the previous decade. This

tremendous increase is spread over all classes of towns, but is most pronounced in the case of towns of Class III which show an increase of 124.9 per cent, by far the highest percentage rate of increase registered by any class, against 21.6 by Class IV, 41.19 by Class V and 7.7 by Class VI.

The total increase in urban population in Assam revealed at the present Census, is 164,652, an increase greater than that of all the four previous decades combined. The increase is most pronounced in the case of Shillong, Silchar, Nowgong, Gauhati, Dibrugarh, Lumding and Karimganj. Excepting the last two, they are all district headquarters and favourably situated for purposes of trade. A part of their increase is due to the expansion in Government activities and development work as a result of the partition and the independence of the country. Another very important factor is the heavy influx of refugees who have concentrated mostly in towns or their outskirts in order to eke out a livelihood by petty trades and commerce or miscellaneous sources.

#### 152. Growth of individual towns :

**Shillong** with its Cantonment, now contains 58,512 persons (32,790 males and 25,722 females) against a total population of 38,192 in 1941. The percentage rate of increase is 53.2 in 1941-51, against 43.9 in 1931-41. For the first time in the recorded census history of Assam we have now a Class II town in Assam. Shillong minus the Cantonment had a population of 7,430 in 1901! It more than doubled itself by 1921, and again by 1941. In the last decade, it showed a total increase of 23,022, (i.e., 74.9 per cent) which is equal to the entire increase registered during the previous four decades. In the last 20 years, Shillong was linked to Sylhet by a tarred road and thence by a metalled one to Silchar. The former now falls into Pakistan. Shillong is now linked to Silchar by a new jeepable road *via* Jowai, Garampani and Haflong; another road between these two towns *via* Badarpur is being constructed. A great expansion of Government departments has led to a tremendous growth of the town, yet its real charm—the quite peace of its pine-covered hills—is not gone. After the merger of the Khasi States with the district territory, the distinction between the British portion of

Shillong and that of the Khasi State of Myllicm has disappeared. Displaced persons contributed 4,698 to the growth of the town.

**Gauhati**: Gauhati shows an increase of 14,017, which is nearly half its total increase during the last 50 years. It is the political capital of Assam, though Shillong is the seat of the Government. Being the headquarters of Kamrup, the most populous district of Assam, with its excellent river, rail and air communications and increased educational facilities, it is the unofficial capital of Assam and can boast of a University and a High Court within its limits. On account of its suburban population living in Pandu, Kamakhya, Amingaon and North Gauhati, the population of Gauhati appears much less than what it actually is. It should also be noted that this is the population of Gauhati municipal area only while the portion which falls in the Panbari Mauza outside the Municipal limits, is excluded. With its expanding educational facilities, the central position on air routes to Imphal, Dibrugarh and Agartala from Calcutta and the head quarters of the Assam Link Railway, it is bound to raise hopes that its “former glories may yet return and that Pragjyotishpur or ‘the city of ancient glory’ as it was called in olden times, may recover again some portion of its faded magnificence”.\* It now harbours 3,459 displaced persons.

**Silchar**. Silchar, with a population of 8785 in 1911, has quadrupled its population in four decades. Its increase of 17,458 at the present Census is greater than that of any other town of Assam except Shillong constituting nearly 65 per cent of its total growth in the last 50 years. Up to 1941, its growth was very slow. As the headquarters of the frontier district of Cachar which adjoins East Pakistan, it has come into considerable prominence after the partition, and houses a large number of refugees (11,133). The same applies to **Karimganj** which shows a growth of 11,285 in the last decade, constituting 80 per cent of its total growth in the last 40 years. The situation of Karimganj as well as Silchar on the border of East Pakistan gives rise to difficult problems of law and order and smuggling across the frontiers. Its refugee element numbers 8,167.

\* 1931 Census Report.

**Lumding's** population has increased by six times in the last 30 years, with a growth of 11,414 in the last decade. It owes its immense growth in the last decade to the partition of the country and the opting out of the Hindu personnel working on the Eastern Bengal Railway to Assam Railways. Subsequently, the relations of these optees came away to join them after the post-partition troubles in Pakistan. Being a convenient rail centre, many other refugees also have concentrated at Lumding numbering 6,441.

The population of **Dibrugarh** (11,227 in 1901) has more than trebled itself in the last 50 years. The last Census shows a tremendous increase of 14,800, which is greater than the combined growth in all the four other decades preceding it. The district authorities report that but for a subsequent reduction of 0.05 square mile of area from its existing boundaries, its present estimated population will number as many as 46,389 souls.

Little needs be said about other towns of Assam. The smallest growth occurs in North Lakhimpur whose total increased by 304 in the past decade, 670 in the previous decade and 154 before that, giving a total increase of 1,128 persons in 30 years. There are several small towns, for example, Palasbari, Nalbari, Nazira, Kohima, Doom Dooma and Haflong which have registered a growth of hardly 1000 or even less in the past decade.

#### 153. Growth of towns and displaced persons :

I have prepared a separate Subsidiary Table giving the number of displaced persons in each town of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Table 3.5 below gives the names of all towns, where displaced persons congregate in numbers larger than one thousand.

TABLE 3.5

*Displaced persons in some towns of Assam and Tripura*

S.No.	Town	Persons	Males	Females
<b>ASSAM</b>				
1.	Silchar	11,133	6,304	4,829
2.	Karimganj	8,167	4,673	3,494
3.	Lumding	6,441	3,333	3,108
4.	Shillong	4,698	2,591	2,107
5.	Nowgong	4,122	2,282	1,840
6.	Barpeta	3,822	2,277	1,545
7.	Hailakandi	3,555	1,967	1,588
8.	Gauhati	3,459	2,067	1,392
9.	Ghubri	2,441	1,367	1,074
10.	Dibrugarh	2,087	1,205	882
11.	Gouripur	1,027	551	476
<b>TRIPURA</b>				
1.	Agartala	19,286	10,570	8,716

Silchar has the unique honour of harbouring by far the largest number of this unfortunate section of humanity, viz., 11,133, followed by Karimganj at some distance with 8,167 and Lumding 6,441; altogether 11 towns in Assam have attracted refugees in numbers more than one thousand. There is no considerable disparity in the figures of population of males and females, and this shows how the migration of displaced persons is more or less of a permanent nature. As many as 54,454 displaced persons have found their way into the urban areas of Assam against 220,001 in the rural areas, out of a total of 274,455. The capital of Tripura alone harbours 19,286 displaced persons, 10,570 of whom are males and 8,716 females. Of the entire census growth of 121,665 in 1941-50 in Assam. The displaced persons alone constitute 45 per cent.

## SECTION IV

### MOVEMENT

#### 154. Immigration into Urban Assam :

Of the total urban population of 414,418 residing in Assam, as many as 230,817 persons (55.7 per cent) were recorded at the Census as born in the district of enumeration. This means that the population consists of 2 more or less

equal halves; the slightly larger half born in the districts of enumeration and the other 44 per cent of the total, born elsewhere. 24,646 or 6 per cent were born elsewhere in the state, while 37,444 or 9 per cent were born elsewhere in India. As many as 112,751 or 27 per cent were

born in Pakistan, apart from whom the number of other foreign born people is 8,758 or 2 per cent only. By far the large majority of immigrants from Pakistan were censused in Assam Plains which accounted for 99,076 persons forming 29 per cent of its entire urban population against 13,675 or 17.8 per cent. of the urban population of the hills. Immigration from territories beyond India is utterly insignificant in the urban areas of Assam Plains where it constitutes only 0.8 per cent against 7.9 per cent in the case of the Hills. The total number of such persons in Assam Hills is 6,059 out of whom 4,517 or 75 per cent are found in the district of United K. & J. Hills alone.

The number of displaced persons enumerated in each town is given in Subsidiary Table 8.6 in Part I-B of the Report. They constitute a new migratory element which can straightway be recognised and measured. The largest number of persons from Pakistan are found in the urban areas of Cachar. Its urban areas show as many as 33,871 persons from Pakistan which is more than one third of the entire migration into the urban areas of this natural division. The second largest number 20,687 is found in Nowgong, mainly due to the large number of displaced persons in Lumding. The percentage of people born in the district of enumeration is similar in the case of both the natural divisions.

#### 155. Immigration into urban areas of the Natural Divisions :

TABLE 3.6

*Immigrants, Actual and Percentage, into the Urban areas of Assam and its Natural Divisions*

Persons Enumerated in	PERSONS BORN IN						
	District of enumeration	Other Districts of the same Natural Division	Other Parts of the State	Adjacent States	Other Parts of India	Beyond India (Pakistan)	Other Territories
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Assam	.. 230,817 (55.7)	15,912 (3.9)	80,734 (2.1)	8,727 (2.1)	28,717 (6.9)	112,751 (27.2)	8,758 (2.1)
Assam Plains	.. 187,736 (55.6)	15,027 (4.5)	1,894 (.5)	6,843 (2.0)	24,388 (7.2)	99,076 (29.4)	2,699 (1.8)
Assam Hills	.. 43,081 (56.1)	885 (1.1)	6,885 (9.0)	1,884 (2.5)	4,329 (5.6)	13,675 (17.8)	6,059 (5.3)

Table 3.6 shows that in Assam Plains, as many as 187,736 or 55.6 per cent were born in the districts of enumeration, 15,027 or 4.5 per cent. in other districts of the same natural division, while 99,076 or 29.4 per cent of the total urban population of this natural division are born in Pakistan. Those born in other parts of the State (0.5), adjacent States (2.0) and other territories (0.8) show insignificant proportions. Those born in other parts of India numbered 24,388 or 7.2 per cent. In Assam Hills as many as 43,081 out of the total urban population of 76,799 or 56.1 per cent are born in the districts of enumeration. Those born in Pakistan numbered 13,675 or 17.8 per cent. Other parts of the State, adjacent States, other parts of India and other territories, each show 9.2, 4.5, 5.6 and 8 per cent, respectively,

#### 156. Migration from rural into urban areas :

As pointed out in the previous Chapter no statistics are available to show the actual movement of people from the rural areas of district into the urban areas, but there I have discussed broadly the nature of migration-cum-registration error in the rural and urban areas to point out the movement from the rural to the urban areas.

The over-all male and female ratio in the urban areas is also of interest as it shows the migratory nature of the urban population. Table 3.7 gives the number of females per thousand males in Assam and its Natural Divisions, as contrasted with those in Assam as a whole as well as rural Assam.

TABLE 3.7  
*Females per 1,000 males*

Assam	General	879
	Rural	890
	Urban	663
Assam Plains	General	868
	Rural	878
	Urban	664
Assam Hills	General	956
	Rural	9689
	Urban	773

From the table, we find that in Assam, while there are 879 females per thousand males in the general population, the number of females per thousand males in the rural and the urban population is 890 and 663. The more unequal distribution of sexes in the towns as revealed by these figures is an indication of the more migratory nature of urban population. The urban areas of the natural divisions also reveal the same tendency. In Assam Plains, the number of females per 1,000 males is 868 for the general population, 878 for the rural, 664 for the urban; in Assam Hills the figures are 956, 969 and 773, respectively.

TABLE 3.8

*Percentage of urban population by sex in Assam and its Natural Divisions, born in the districts of enumeration, other districts of the same natural division, other parts of the State and all other States of India.*

State or Division where	PERCENTAGE BORN IN											
	District of enumeration			Other Districts of same Natural Division			Other parts of the states			All other states of India		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Assam	55.7	31.3	24.4	3.9	2.5	1.4	2.1	1.3	0.8	9.0	6.9	2.1
Assam Plains	55.6	31.9	23.7	4.5	2.9	1.6	0.5	0.3	0.2	9.2	7.1	2.1
Assam Hills	56.1	28.5	27.6	1.1	.8	.3	9.0	5.6	3.4	8.1	5.9	2.2

Having discussed in the preceding sub-para the more uneven distribution of sexes in urban areas, which is the result of temporary migration therein of males in search of jobs who go and live there leaving their families in the villages, let us now examine the figures of Table 3.8. The percentage of population born in the districts of enumeration is 55.7 in Assam, 55.6 in Assam Plains and 56.1 in Assam Hills. But in Assam, females constitute only 24.4 per cent against 31.3 per cent males. In Assam Plains, the respective percentages are 23.7 and 31.9, and 27.6 and 28.5 in Assam Hills. We can see a definite disproportion from these much lower percentage rates for females against males. So far as other districts of the same Natural Division are concerned the distribution of sexes is still more unequal. In Assam, out of a total 3.9 per cent of persons

born in other districts of the same Natural Division, only 1.4 are females, 2.5 being males. The females are therefore, half the number of males. The same tendency we find in Assam Plains; 1.6 per cent females against 2.9 per cent males and in Assam Hills 0.3 per cent females against 0.8 per cent males. In urban areas by far the greatest maldistribution of sexes is noticeable in persons born in all other States of India. They constitute 9.0 per cent of the total population out of which only 2.1 per cent is females while 6.9 per cent males. For Assam Plains, the percentages are 2.1 and 7.1 whereas for Assam Hills they are 2.2 and 5.9. Such maldistribution of sexes gives us a valuable insight into the composition of urban population and its migratory nature.

## SECTION V

## NATURAL INCREASE—BIRTHS AND DEATHS

## 157. Birth Rate :

The mean decennial birth rate is available only for Assam Plains. The birth rate for Assam as a whole, is not available unless we apply the birth rate of the Plains to the State. As the Plains contain as much as 86 per cent of the entire population of the State, this should be unobjectionable, as complete data for the State are not available, the Table 3.9 given below compares the mean decennial birth rates of the rural areas and the urban areas of Assam Plains.

TABLE 3.9  
*Mean Decennial Birth rates in Assam Plains  
Rural and Urban (1921-50)*

	Mean Decennial Birth-rate		
	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
Assam Plains—Urban	18.4	28.3	25.9
Rural	16.8	25.5	27.1

In considering the urban birth as well as death rates, it should be remembered that the rural/urban break-up in the Public Health Reports is not identical with the rural/urban break-up at the Censuses. To overcome this difficulty the birth and death rates are calculated only for those places for which the population as well as the vital statistics figures were available for the entire decade. The procedure is fully explained in the notes at the top of Subsidiary Table 3.3. Table 3.9 above does not show any consistent pattern. The urban birth rate in 1921-30 which was 25.9 is definitely lower than the rural 27.1. This is what we should normally expect but the same tendency is not noticed in the last 2 decades wherein the urban birth rates are decidedly higher than the rural ones. The urban area population involved is so small that I do not propose to examine this discrepant pattern in detail. The main reason appears to be better registration of births in urban areas than in the rural. Another reason for the higher birth rate in urban areas appears to be better facilities available for maternity wards in town hospitals which inflate the number of births in towns as well as the birth rate without any appreciable effect on the rural rate in view of the far larger numbers of the rural areas.

For the same reasons I do not propose to discuss the peculiar behaviour of the urban birth

rate in rising from 25.9 in 1921-30 to 28.3 in 1931-40 and registering a drastic fall in 1941-50 to 18.4. The greatly decreasing efficiency of vital statistics seems to be the main explanation, not any wide-spread adoption of neo-Malthusian methods of population control.

## 158 Death Rate :

The mean decennial death rate of urban population as given in Subsidiary Table 3.3 is summarised below in Table 3.10 for Assam Plains.

TABLE 3.10  
*Mean Decennial Death rates in Assam  
Plains, Rural and Urban*

	Mean Decennial Death-rate		
	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
Assam Plains—Urban	10.3	16.4	19.9
Rural	11.4	17.2	20.8

The figures show a slightly lower death rate for urban areas as against rural due to better medical, especially hospital facilities in towns. The death rate which was 19.9 in 1921 fell slightly to 16.4 in 1931-40 and considerably in the past decade to 10.3.

## 159. Natural Increase :

Figures are available only for Assam Plains which are summarised in Table 3.11.

TABLE 3.11  
*Natural increase in Assam Plains,  
Rural and Urban*

	1941-50	1931-40	1921-30
Assam Plains—Urban	8.1	11.9	6.0
Rural	5.4	8.2	6.3

The rate of natural increase for 1921-30 is actually lower in urban areas than in the rural. The difference is, however, slight to the tune of 0.3 only. For the last 2 decades the natural rate of increase for urban areas is definitely higher than that of the rural. The rate of natural increase for urban areas which was only 6 in 1921-30 was almost double in the next decennium, while showing a precipitous fall in the following decade from 11.9 to 8.1.

### 160. Census Growth and Natural Increase in Assam Plains Urban :

Table 3.12 gives the census growth as well as natural increase in Assam Plains urban for the last three decades, both in terms of overall increase in numbers as well as mean decennial growth rates.

TABLE 3.12  
*Census growth and natural increase in Assam Plains Urban (1921-50)*

	1941-50		1931-40		1921-30	
	Total increase	Growth rate	Total increase	Growth rate	Total increase	Growth rate
Census growth	121,665	46.5	42,400	—24.1	33,114	—24.1
Natural Increase	21,180	8.1	20,796	11.9	8,150	6.0
Difference i.e. N.M.						
R.F.	100,485	38.4	21,605	12.2	24,964	18.1

The difference between census growth and natural increase in all the three decades in Assam Plains urban is definitely small compared with a similar difference in Assam Plains rural. This small extent, however, is mainly due to the smallness of the numbers involved and will be actually considerable in terms of the total numbers of the census growth as well as natural increase involved in the urban areas of the plains division. This difference between census growth and natural increase is the smallest in 1931-40, viz., 21,605 against 24,964 in 1921-30; for the past decade, the difference is merely 5 times what we found in the case of the decade 1931-40, viz., 100,485. This large difference is, of course, mainly due to the balance of migration into the urban areas from the rural areas; a secondary factor is, of course, the usual under-recording of births and deaths, more in the case of the former than the latter, to which frequent references have already been made in Chapters I and II. Natural increase in the urban areas of Assam in the past decade was only 21,180 whereas the difference between the census growth *minus* the natural increase was very nearly five times as large, viz., 100,485. This difference very slightly exceeded natural increase for the decade 1931-40 whereas for the earlier decade 1921-30, it was well over three times. This gives us an idea as to how important the net migration of rural population into urban areas

is when we know that recording of vital statistics in urban areas defective as it is, is much less so than in the case of the rural or general population of the State.

I do not propose to dilate on the migration stream into urban areas. For the past two decades the migration consisted mainly of educated people in rural areas crowding into urban for a better and more secured means of livelihood as well as to enjoy better educational and medical facilities as well as other amenities in the towns. At this census, however, there is a particular and easily recognisable migration stream which we must take into account. This is that of the refugees who are not merely recognisable but whose numbers are precisely known. 54,454 refugees were recorded in the urban areas of Assam as given in Subsidiary Table 8.6—Displaced persons in each town of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. As has been often remarked, they are attracted to towns or their outskirts because of the greater ease and facilities available therein to eke out a livelihood. If their numbers are subtracted, the difference between census growth and natural increase for the decade 1941-50 narrows down to 46,031, which is only slightly more than double the natural increase.

### 161. Migration-cum-Registration Error :

The above difference between census growth and natural increase, which we have called NMRE, i.e., net migration-cum-registration error does not show any consistent pattern in the last three decades as we found from Table 3.11 given above. NMRE was 18.1 per cent in 1921-30 from which it fell to 12.2 per cent in 1931-40. In 1941-50, it has again shot up to 38.4, a rate nearly three times that of 1931-40 and twice as large as in 1921-30. Every single district in Assam Plains shares, this pattern of fall followed by a rise. Where refugees have congregated most in the urban areas, the districts show the largest NMRE, e.g., Cachar 70.4 per cent, Nowgong 62.6 per cent and Darrang 42.4 per cent. It is significant to find that none of the columns 29 to 31 in Subsidiary Table 3.3 give a *minus* sign, i.e., an excess of emigration over immigration in urban areas. In view of the small numbers of the urban population of the districts, it will be unsafe to draw any further conclusions from the slender data at our disposal.



## SECTION VI

## LIVELIHOOD PATTERN

162. **Livelihood Pattern of urban areas of Assam and its Natural Division :**

The following Table gives a succinct picture of the urban population of Assam and its Natural Divisions :—

TABLE 3.13

*Percentage Distribution of Livelihood Class of Urban Population*

Class	Assam	Assam Plains	Assam Hills
I	3.8	3.8	3.9
II	1.3	1.5	0.1
III	0.2	0.2	0.0
IV	1.2	1.4	0.5
Total Agriculture (I-IV)	6.5	6.9	4.5
V	16.5	17.5	11.6
VI	27.6	30.1	16.8
VII	7.2	8.1	3.4
VIII	42.2	37.4	63.7
Total Non-Agriculture (V-VIII)	93.5	93.1	95.5

93.5 per cent of Urban Assam depends on non-agricultural means of livelihood and only 6.5 per cent depends on agriculture. It will be remembered that the corresponding figures for the rural population are 23.5 per cent for non-agricultural classes and 76.5 for agricultural classes. Such overwhelming primacy of non-agricultural means of livelihood and the insignificance of agriculture in urban areas does not need any elaborate explanation; it is almost implied in the distinction between urban and rural areas. When we realise that nearly 16 per cent of the urban population of Madhya Pradesh belongs to agricultural classes, the percentage in Madras being 17, we at once realise that towns of Assam are more truly urban and that fewer areas which are merely larger agricultural villages feature in our classification. The percentage in Assam

Plains is 6.9 and 4.5 in the Hills. Non-agriculture in Assam Plains is 93.1 against 95.5 in Assam Hills. Thus the towns of Assam Hills are even less agricultural in their economic pattern than those of Assam Plains.

163. **Agricultural Classes in Towns :**

The largest agricultural class in Assam as well as its Natural Divisions is Class I, of the same order in Assam and its Natural Divisions round about 3.8 per cent. It includes the large land holders who get their lands cultivated through their servants or partners in produce or profit, as well as the cultivators who have their fields near about and live within the towns limits, while working on those fields. Livelihood Class II which is 1.3 per cent in Assam and 1.5 per cent in Assam Plains is entirely insignificant, only one tenth per cent, in Assam Hills. Agricultural labourers are nil in Assam Hills, whereas in Assam and the Plains they are of the order of 0.2 per cent. Agricultural rent receivers in Assam Hills are equally insignificant being hardly one-half per cent against 1.4 in Assam Plains and 1.2 in Assam. Livelihood Class III or Agricultural labourers are far outnumbered by the land-lord class in Assam plains. It is usual to find a considerable proportion of agricultural rent receivers and landlords living on the fat of their lands spending the rent received from their tenants in towns, where they usually prefer to stay for the education of their children and to enjoy the various civic amenities of modern life which are not available in villages. The agricultural labourers should be conspicuous by their absence in towns as there are no lands in towns which they can work on. For the same reason cultivating tenants should be few in urban areas. Owner cultivators form the largest proportion of total agricultural classes, nearly three-fifths, both in Assam and Assam Plains. In Assam Hills they constitute an even more overwhelming proportion, viz., over four-fifths.

164. **Non-agricultural Classes in Towns :**

The percentage distribution of non-agricultural classes in Assam and its Natural Divisions is given in Table 3.13. **Livelihood Class V** (Production other than Cultivation) having 16.5

per cent of the urban population, is larger than Class VII Transport only (7.2). In Assam Plains it constitutes 17.5 per cent and 11.6 in Assam Hills. A perusal of Subsidiary Table 5.1B given in Part I-B of this Report which gives the number of persons in each class and sub-class per thousand of non-agricultural classes only in urban areas will show that the percentage of self-supporting persons belonging to Livelihood Class V is 17.6, 18.9 and 12.1 in Assam, Assam Plains and Assam Hills, respectively. Commerce or Livelihood Class VI is the second largest livelihood class in Assam as well as its both Natural Divisions. It is 27.6 per cent in Assam, 30.1 in the Plains and 16.8 in the Hills. Here a perusal of Subsidiary Table 5.1 B mentioned above shows that if the percentage is calculated on the non-agricultural population of the urban areas alone, the figures will be slightly larger 19.5, 32.3 and 17.6 respectively. This improvement of commerce in Urban Assam or its Natural Divisions should not give rise to visions of large banking concerns, departmental stores, insurance companies, export and import agencies or other business concerns in the mind of a reader. Unfortunately what little trade and commerce there should be in Assam goes out and remains out, as most of the tea companies have their head offices in Calcutta. The population returned herein is mostly dependant on petty trades and commerce, largely hawking, tea stalls and pan, bidi and cigarette shops. **Transport** as a means of livelihood is of the lowest magnitude among all non-agricultural classes all along the line, yet it is larger than all agricultural classes combined. In Assam it is 7.2, 8.1 in Assam Plains and 3.4 in Assam Hills. If the percentages are calculated on the agricultural population alone they would be 7.7, 8.7 and 3.5 respectively as given in Subsidiary Table 5.1 B. **Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources or Class VIII** is by far the largest livelihood class in Assam and its Natural Divisions constituting 42.2, 37.4 and 63.7 per cent. The corresponding figures, if the percentage is calculated on actual non-agricultural population residing in the urban areas, are 45.2, 40.1 and 66.7 in Subsidiary Table 5.1 B. This Class consists of Division 8-Health Education and Public Administration and Division 9-Services not elsewhere specified, of the 10 Divisions of all Industries and Services according to

the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme. Towns in Assam have little or no industry, as the largest and most extensive industry in Assam, viz., tea, is mostly confined to the rural areas; while commerce and transport take a back number in backward Assam. Hence we find over two-fifths of persons in Urban Assam dependent on other services and miscellaneous sources. As commerce, industry and transport are definitely more developed in the towns of Assam Plains than those in the Hills, the population dependent on such miscellaneous sources is less in Assam Plains (37.4) than in Assam Hills (63.7).

#### 165. Livelihood pattern of urban Manipur and Tripura :

The urban population of Manipur is now only 2,862 consisting of the central portion of the town of Imphal. Here agricultural population forms only 7.6 per cent against 92.4 non-agricultural. Agricultural labourer is nil in this portion of Imphal while Class I is as large as 5.5 followed by 1.2 under cultivating tenants and about 1 per cent as agricultural rent receivers. 77.3 per cent of the entire population, i.e., over three-fourths depend on other services and miscellaneous sources, while a goodly portion 8.7 per cent depend on commerce. This is due to the fact that this portion of Imphal includes its market where Manipuri women bring their wares and strike with the buyers as hard bargains as traders anywhere in the world do. The percentage under Transport is not even 1 while it is 5.6 for Class V.

The urban population of Tripura consists of the population of Agartala, its capital. 13.4 depend on agriculture and 86.6 on non-agriculture. Under Agriculture two Classes of considerable importance are Livelihood Classes I and IV. Cultivating tenants form only 1.3 per cent while Agricultural Labourers consist of less than even one-fifth per cent. Under non-agricultural Classes by far the largest is Class VIII containing 43 per cent of the urban population while Class VI consists of another 26.9 per cent followed by 12.8 under Class V and the rest, i.e., 4 per cent under Class VII.

# 166. Salient Features of Livelihood Pattern of Urban Areas in Districts :

TABLE 3.14

## *Livelihood Pattern of Urban Population in districts of Assam*

District	Percentage of population, which is	
	Agricultural	Non-agricultural
1. Cachar.	3.4	96.6
2. Goalpara.	5.3	94.7
3. Kamrup	8.2	91.8
4. Darrang	5.9	94.1
5. Nowgong	8.0	92.1
6. Sibsagar	14.3	85.7
7. Lakhimpur	4.5	95.5
8. United K. & J. Hills	3.4	96.6
9. Naga Hills	7.4	92.6
10. Lushai Hills	21.6	78.4
11. United Mikir & North Cachar Hills	5.7	94.3

Subsidiary Table 3.7 reveals some striking dissimilarity regarding the livelihood pattern of the urban population of the various districts. Table 3.14 showing the percentage of persons depending on agriculture and non-agriculture in the plains and autonomous districts may be seen in this connection. The percentage of persons depending on agriculture varies from 3.5 in Cachar to 14.3 in Sibsagar. The towns of Sibsagar are generally small and have plenty of land on which sizable part of the town population subsists. No other district has such a large percentage of its urban population depending on agriculture, the next one being Kamrup (8.2). Cachar's low percentage is mainly due to the arrival of the refugees who living in towns or on the outskirts take recourse to petty trades and miscellaneous sources, thus greatly swelling the ranks of Class VI, a factor which is almost absent in the case of Sibsagar. The variations in non-agricultural population are not so wide and sweeping as in the case of agriculture. All plain districts return over 90 per cent, with Cachar 96.5 taking the palm and Sibsagar 85.7 bringing up the rear. Shillong

with the Cantonment shows the highest percentage of population dependent on non-agriculture 96.6.

There now remains little to discuss about the livelihood pattern of the districts in individual Classes. Sibsagar has the largest proportion of any district under each of the agricultural classes except Class III for which the palm goes to Nowgong. Cachar has the lowest proportion of persons in Class I (13.4), against Sibsagar 74.3 and the Natural Division average of 37.9. In Class III also it has the lowest percentage. Lakhimpur shows the least percentage (1.4), of Agricultural Class IV against the plains average of 13.6 and the Sibsagar peak figure of 24.5. Lushai Hills has as large as 20.9 per cent in Class I, the highest percentage in the entire State; it returns 0 under Class II. Class III is nil in Naga Hills, Lushai Hills as well as United Mikir and North Cachar Hills while Class IV is nil in Naga Hills and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. Production other than Cultivation or Livelihood Class V is largest in Lakhimpur (22 per cent), against Cachar's 15 due to various industries e.g. coal, oil and tea in the former. Kamrup supports over one-third of its total urban population by petty trade and commerce, but the proportion falls below even one-fourth in Nowgong and Darrang. Transport which supports only 7.2 per cent of the urban population of Assam and 8.1 per cent of Assam Plains, supports as much as 24.8 per cent in Nowgong. The enterprising Khasis have practically monopolised the entire trade of the district and Shillong in their hands instead of Marwaris and other up country merchants as in other districts. 17.5 per cent of people in the largest town of Assam depend on commerce. For United Mikir and North Cachar Hills i.e., the town of Halflong, the figure is even larger (19.3) but here the total population involved is just 2,168 against 53,756 of Shillong not including the Cantonment. The railway population of Halflong is responsible for greatly inflating the percentage of people of Halflong maintained by Transport and raising it to 20.9. They are mostly Government servants posted at Halflong which apart from being an important Railway Station on the Liding-Badarpur hill section railway is the headquarters of the North Cachar Hills Sub-division and also the district headquarters for some sections of the Assam Railway

167 **Proportion of each Livelihood Class in Towns :**

It will be interesting to see how many of the General Population under each Livelihood Class live in towns. Subsidiary Table, 3.6 gives the figures, which are summarised in Table 3.15 below. The object of this examination is to see whether any particular Livelihood Class shows a decided preference for towns.

TABLE 3.15

*Number per 1,000 of General Population and of each Livelihood Class who live in towns.*

Name	General Population	Livelihood Classes							
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Assam	46	3	4	6	61	51	324	260	285
Plains	43	3	5	7	61	46	313	255	247
Hills	62	3	2	1	61	169	455	317	467

It will be seen that among the Agricultural Classes, Class IV, *i.e.*, Non-cultivating Owners, Agricultural Rent Receivers and their dependants have a distinct preference for urban life. This is as one would normally expect because this Class is economically inactive as it does not attend to cultivation on its lands itself, preferring to live a more comfortable and luxurious life in the towns. Out of every thousand of General Population in Assam, only 46 live in towns. Of this 46, 3 maintain themselves by agriculture while the remaining 43 by non-agricultural occupations. The numbers for Assam Plains are 4 and 39 while those for Assam Hills 2 and 60. Out of every thousand persons of General Population in Assam Plains 43 live in towns; in the case of Assam Hills the figure is 62. The 43 persons in Assam maintained by non-agricultural means of livelihood are distributed as follows:—

Class V.	Class VI	Class VII.	Class VIII.
8	13	3	19

The relative importance of agriculture and the four non-agricultural means of livelihood is clearly brought out by these figures. The same pattern we discover in Assam Plains as well as in Hills.

Among the non-agricultural Classes persons engaged in commerce (32.4 per cent.) preponderate in towns. This is as one would expect to find, as it is only in urban areas that there is scope for petty trades and commerce. The same tendency, though to a lesser extent, is revealed by Classes VII and VIII as much as 26 and 28.5 per cent respectively of their total population living in urban areas. In spite of the fact that the Urban Areas constitute only a fraction of the total population, *viz.*, 4.6 per cent they contain as much as 26 per cent and 28 per cent of these two Livelihood Classes and nearly one third of Class VI (32.4 per cent). It is only in towns that one finds more modern means of transport like buses, lorries and rickshaws, while scope for earning one's livelihood by miscellaneous sources can be found only there, enabling many people to get a comfortable living by attending each other's needs and comforts. The comparatively small figure under Class V, *i.e.*, 6 per cent confirms the fact that most of our production is still of the cottage or small scale type which is being carried on in the rural areas and that major industries which prefer towns to villages have yet to develop in our backward State on any appreciable scale. Class VIII is a residuary category and includes the Professions and Services (Government, local authorities or private) as well as miscellaneous means of livelihood. Unless major industries develop there is no likelihood of figures under Class V catching up with those under other non-agricultural classes. The overall pattern that emerges from the above table is more or less the same in Assam and Assam Plains. The pattern for Agricultural Classes of Assam Hills also shows the same features but not so the non-agricultural classes. Assam Hills contain only 6.2 per cent of the total population but Non-agricultural Livelihood Classes V, VI, VII and VIII contain respectively 19.6, 45.5, 31.7 and 46.7 per cent of the total population of Assam Hills in these respective Classes. It shows that whatever little trade or commerce or transport or industry or scope for earning livelihood from miscellaneous sources is there in the Natural Division is confined mostly to its urban areas.

168 **Livelihood Pattern of Urban Assam compared with that of Urban areas of some Part 'A' States :**

Table 3.16 given below compares the Livelihood Pattern of the urban population in Assam

with some major Part 'A' States of India :—

TABLE 3.16

*Livelihood Pattern of Urban Assam compared with that of the urban areas of Part 'A' States*

States	Percentage of population in livelihood class							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Assam	3.8	1.2	0.2	1.2	16.4	27.6	7.2	42.2
Madras	7.1	3.0	4.6	2.6	23.6	19.0	5.8	34.3
Uttar Pradesh	8.4	1.6	1.0	1.4	24.9	21.9	6.2	34.6
West Bengal	1.8	0.7	1.0	0.7	28.7	24.2	9.3	33.6
Orissa	7.8	1.5	2.0	2.7	13.3	17.5	5.6	49.6
Madhya Pradesh	8.1	1.1	5.4	1.0	27.8	20.0	7.5	29.1

While comparing these figures one should bear in mind that some of the differences in the proportions of different Livelihood Classes may be more apparent than real and may be attributed to the personal equation of the enumerators. The economic part of the questionnaire was the most difficult one in which their individual predilections and their qualifications and understanding of the instructions or lack of the same were bound to play an important part either creating differences when none existed or magnifying them, where they are already present to a certain extent.

## SECTION VII

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 169. General Distribution—Extremely slow pace of urbanisation :

We have already seen how in a predominantly rural country like India, Assam is overwhelmingly rural, with 95.4 per cent of its population living in its 25,327 villages against an urban population of 414,418 or a beggarly 4.6 per cent living in its 26 towns. There is not a single city in Assam, Manipur or Tripura. Even if we take into account the population of the four urban areas of Pandu, Badarpur, Digboi and North Gauhati, which is given on the fly-leaf of the main Table A.V and which totals to 52,595, the percentage of urban population does not rise beyond 5.16 per cent. The density of urban Assam is very low, viz., 7,880 persons per square mile which is even lower for the urban areas of the Assam Hills, viz., 5,003 persons per square mile. The average population per town in Assam works out only 14,807, which is yet another measure of urban density. Only 14 per cent. of the population is found in towns of size 50,000—100,000. Nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the urban population is found in towns whose population is below 20,000 but more than 10,000. Table 3.2 gives briefly the distribution of urban population in urban areas of different classes.

#### 170. Growth of Urban population :

This has been succinctly summed up in Table 3.4. Total growth in the last 50 years of the urban population in Assam has

been 324,630, i.e., 361.3 per cent of the population at the beginning of the present century. The growth in the last decade alone amounts to 164,652, i.e., 62.9 per cent in the past decade which is itself more than the combined growth in all other decades except the last of the present century. If we include four urban areas of Pandu, Badarpur, Digboi and North Gauhati, whose population is given in flyleaf of the main table A-V, the position would be even more striking. We should, however, note that the growth of urban population in Assam is not keeping pace with the tremendous overall growth of its total population. It is clear that the pace of urbanisation in Assam is very slow as evidenced from the fact that the urban population which constituted 3.3 per cent of the total population of Assam in 1941 now amounts to only 4.6 per cent (5.1 per cent if the above four areas are taken into consideration).

#### 171. Factors affecting growth :

We have already examined how the natural increase accounts for only a fraction of the total growth of urban population in Assam in the past decade. Natural increase for the urban areas for which vital statistics are available for all the three decades amounts only 21,180, whereas the census growth for the same urban areas is 121,665 (as against a total urban growth of 164,652 for all areas treated as urban at the present census). This huge discrepancy is mainly due to two factors—(i) under recording of births

and deaths, more in the former than in the latter and (ii) the balance of net migration into urban areas. Here there are only two streams of migration which attract our attention. First is the migration from rural into urban areas to seek better opportunities for getting on in life as well as better educational, medical and recreational facilities; second is the arrival of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan into the urban areas. The refugees prefer to live in urban areas, even though it may be on the outskirts of the towns, in order to secure an opportunity to eke out a livelihood by taking to miscellaneous sources as well as petty trades, and casual labour. Fortunately we are in a position to determine exactly the extent of this migration stream. It amounts to 54,454 refugees who are recorded in all the urban areas of the State.

#### 172. Future trends for the decade 1951-60 :

The future trends regarding population of urban Assam at the end of the present decade are in the direction of an accelerated population growth. Unless conditions in Eastern Pakistan radically improve, displaced persons will continue to pour in Assam and will continue to prefer urban areas to the rural. Better medical facilities and the invention of new scientific drugs, some of which are almost miraculous in their effect, will continue to bring down the actual death rate whereas the birth rate is likely to remain stable as there is yet no pronounced or even discerning trend for family limitation and birth control. The ever increasing emphasis on the planned development of the Nation as well as its individual States is likely to bring about some increase in industrialisation, communications and trade and commerce. These factors will also give a fillip to increased urbanisation and we can confidently look forward to another large increment in the urban population of Assam in the coming decade. Even then the present extent of urbanisation in Assam is so small, viz., 4.6 (5.2 if we take into consideration the four areas mentioned above), that it would require an increase of well over 100 per cent to bring up Assam's population to 10 per cent of its general population. Though Assam is unlikely to attain this proportion in the normal course of events in the next decade, it may do so within less than 15 years.

#### 173. The economic outlook :

Only 6.5 per cent of the urban population belongs to agricultural classes where as 93.5 per cent belongs to non-agricultural classes. Among the agricultural classes 3.8 per cent belong to owner-cultivators whereas classes II and IV, i.e., cultivators of unowned land and non-cultivating owners of land amount to about 1.2 per cent each leaving a microscopic fraction of 0.2 per cent for the agricultural labourers. The classification of the self-supporting persons of the non-agricultural occupations on which the large majority of the urban people depend is given in detail in Subsidiary Tables 5.7 to 5.17. A perusal of Subsidiary Table 5.7 shows that there are 126,151 self-supporting persons of all industries and services, who reside in the urban areas of the State and they are distributed in the 10 divisions of industries and service in the Natural Divisions as shown in Table 3.17 below :—

TABLE 3.17.

*Distribution of 10,000 self-supporting persons of all industries and services in the urban areas of Assam, its Natural Divisions and Tripura.*

	URBAN AREAS OF			
	Assam	Assam Plains Division	Assam Hills Division	Tripura
(1) Total number of self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services.	126,151	100,400	25,751	10,247
(2) Number per 10,000 self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services, engaged in Division.				
0—Primary Industries.	190	201	147	306
1—Mining and Quarrying.	10	11	7	..
2—Processing and Manufacture—Foodstuffs, Textile, Leather and products thereof.	509	530	426	826
3—Processing and Manufacture—Metals, Chemicals and products thereof.	384	452	118	179

	URBAN AREAS OF			
	Assam	Assam Plains Division	Assam Hills Division	Tripura
4—Processing and Manufacture— Not elsewhere specified.	620	664	449	306
5—Construction and Utilities.	313	314	305	92
6—Commerce ..	2,564	2,808	1,613	3,034
7—Transport, Storage and Communications.	898	995	526	528
8.—Health, Education and Public Administration.	1,657	1,174	3,537	552
9—Service not elsewhere specified.	2,855	2,851	2,872	4,177
All Divisions ..	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

From Table 3.17 given above, we find that industries and transport as such play a very unimportant part in providing means of livelihood for our urban population. Mining and quarrying are absolutely negligible whereas construction and utilities provide occupations for only 3 per cent of the urban population. Primary industries not elsewhere specified engage less than 2 per cent, processing and manufacture of metals, chemicals and products thereof less than 4 per cent, processing and manufacture of foodstuffs, textiles, leather and products thereof 5 per cent and processing and manufacture not elsewhere specified another 6 per cent. On account of poor means of communications in the urban areas of the far-off State, people supported are barely 9 per cent. Commerce, however, plays a very important part and is responsible for the maintenance of over one-fourth of the entire urban population. It is surpassed only by division 9, services not elsewhere specified, under which are included over 28.5 per cent of the total urban population. Health, education and public administration is also important as they provide livelihood for

over 16.5 per cent of its people. A detailed discussion on the distribution of the self-supporting persons in different industries and services with their urban and rural break-up will be found in Chapter V—Non-agricultural Classes.

#### 174. Urgent need of controlled development of towns :

It is regrettable that inspite of the immense area of the State which gives ample scope for an orderly expansion of its urban areas, towns in Assam have grown up in a haphazard manner, creating slums and congested and unhygienic environments, which need only a little foresight and planning to be fully controlled. I have already drawn attention to the need for a town planning agency with the provision of adequate funds to control our present haphazard urban development. Against the possibility of the present urban population doubling itself in the next 15 years or so, the necessity for controlling its development becomes greater than ever. For the purpose of town development it is wiser and far cheaper to allow building construction to proceed according to plan than to demolish houses after they have been allowed to be built in a random manner. In Chapter V, Section II Transport, storage and communications, the transport development in the State will be reviewed at length, but here it may be mentioned that motor transport in the State has doubled itself during the last decade. Motor buses and jeeps are penetrating places in the farthest interior, bringing towns and villages in such a close and constant contact as they never had before. Increased transport facilities are likely to encourage further immigration into the urban areas from our villages where the present numbers are more than can be economically supported by the present state of our agriculture. If we are to check and control this increasing drift to urban areas, the remedy lies not merely in planning urban development but also in undertaking urgent schemes of rural reconstruction and increasing the educational, medical and recreational facilities in the rural areas, in short to urbanise the rural areas themselves in the best sense of the word.



## CHAPTER IV

# AGRICULTURAL CLASSES

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 175. Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme 1951 :

At the present Census, great emphasis was laid on ascertaining the economic status and means of livelihood of the people in accordance with the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme, 1951, prepared by the Registrar-General and reproduced in full in Part II-B (Economic Tables) of the Census Report.

#### 176. Importance of definitions of terms used :

The Scheme has several new features and although terms, such as "Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned", "Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned", "Non-cultivating owners of land and agricultural rent receivers", "Self-supporting persons", "Earning dependants", etc., mentioned in the scheme, are of very common use, they have specific meanings attached to them and unless this is very carefully understood, there is every likelihood of drawing very erroneous conclusions by trying to compare the 1951 Census Economic Data with figures of other economic enquiries made in the country. Even at the enumeration stage exhaustive instructions were given to the enumerators so that

all avoidable mistakes and confusion in understanding the terms were avoided.

#### 177. Reference to Statistics :

Table A-V (Towns arranged territorially with population by livelihood classes), given in Part II-A of the Report, contains details of distribution of the agricultural classes in each town of the State. Similar distribution for the urban and rural areas of the thanas will be found in Table E (Summary figures by Districts and Thanass). Particulars of the agricultural classes in respect of every village of the State are contained in (Economic Tables) of the Census Report.

The economic status of the agricultural classes showing the economically active, semi-active and passive persons in the different parts of the State up to the district level is given in Economic Table B-I in Part II-B of the Report. The break-up for the Census tracts would be found in the District Census Hand-books. The secondary means of livelihood of the economically active or semi-active persons of the agricultural classes is contained in Table B-II for the State, each Natural Division and District. Details for the Census tracts would be available in the District Census Hand-books.

**The Subsidiary Tables :**

The Subsidiary Tables of the 4th series contained in Part I-B of the Report form the basis of the review contained in this Chapter. In Subsidiary Table 4.1, the ratio of agricultural classes per 1,000 persons of general population is considered along with the number in each of the four agricultural livelihood classes and sub-classes per 10,000 persons of all agricultural classes.

Subsidiary Tables 4.2 to 4.5 deal with each of the four agricultural livelihood classes separately and show the distribution of 10,000 persons of each livelihood class in each of the three sub-classes of self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants. They also give an analysis of the secondary means of livelihood of 10,000 persons of each livelihood class.

Subsidiary Table 4.6 gives a complete picture of active and semi-active people in cultivation. It thus shows the contribution to agriculture of those persons whose principal means of livelihood is other than cultivation.

Subsidiary Tables 4.7 to 4.9 deal with the progress of cultivation during the last three decades, components of cultivated area per capita, land area per capita and trend of cultivation per capita during this period. The population figures made use of in preparing these Tables are based on the Census figures. The agricultural statistics required were very kindly made available by the Director of Land Records, Assam.

Subsidiary Table 4.9, which gives the land area per capita and the trend of cultivation, deals with the supreme problem of population and sustenance and has been reviewed at length in Section IX of this Chapter.

**178. Economic Questionnaire :**

In order to understand fully the significance and accuracy of the statistics reviewed in this Chapter, it is very necessary to thoroughly discuss the census questionnaire and the instructions issued to amplify it. Questions 9, 10 and 11 in the census questionnaire contain these economic data. (The terms used in Question 13, though similar to those in question 10, have entirely different meaning and practically no connection with one another). I give below extracts from the booklet of instructions to enumerators to explain their significance.

**178-A. Question 9.—Economic Status :****Part I.—Dependency.**

Every person must be placed into one of the three classes defined below :—

Write : 1 for a self-supporting person,  
2 for a non-earning dependant,  
3 for an earning dependant,  
in the first compartment.

(1) A 'self-supporting person' is one who earns an income in cash or kind sufficient at least for his own maintenance.

(2) A 'non-earning dependant' is a person who has no income of his own either in cash or in kind.

(3) An 'earning dependant' is a person who earns a regular (not casual) income not sufficient even for his own maintenance. It includes seasonal income also.

Where two or more members of a family household jointly cultivate land and secure an income therefrom, each of them should be regarded as earning a part of the income. None of them is, therefore, a non-earning dependant. Each of them should be classed as either a 'self-supporting person' or an 'earning dependant', according to the share of income attributable to him (to her). You should not make any detailed calculation of these shares, but *accept what the head of the household declares* to be the share of each person. The same applies to any other business carried on jointly.

This does not mean that everyone who works is necessarily a self-supporting person, or an earning dependant.

**Avoid two common mistakes :**

(1) Recording only the head of the household as self-supporting.

(2) Recording all women automatically as non-earning dependants. Women may be earning dependants or even self-supporting.

**Illustrations**

(1) A housewife who cooks for the family, brings up the children or manages the household is doing very valuable work. Nevertheless, her economic status is that of a non-earning dependant, if she does not also earn an income.

(2) An Assamese cultivator's wife who actively helps her husband in cultivation and/or weaves and sells cloth, thereby adding to the family income, must not be recorded as a non-earning dependant. She will be recorded as a self-supporting person or an earning dependant according as her share of income is sufficient or insufficient for her own maintenance.

(3) Wives as well as children of tea garden labourers who earn regular wages, which may be seasonal, are all of them self-supporting persons if each one's earning is sufficient at least for his/her own maintenance, failing this, he or she will be merely an earning dependant.

(4) A cultivator's son who looks after his father's cattle is a dependant, but if he works as a cow-herd elsewhere and earns a meagre but regular wage, he is an earning dependant.

(5) Madhab, with his wife and two children, stays at Golaghat with his father Shri Dalu Ram Choudhury and earns Rs. 55 per mensem as a clerk in the Subdivisional Officer's office, which according to Shri Dalu Ram, is sufficient for Madhab's own maintenance. Shri Daluram gets a pension of Rs. 20 per mensem. The family has two bighas of Kheti land. Shri Daluram is an earning dependant. Madhab's wife and two children are dependants, whereas Madhab himself is a self-supporting person although his income is not sufficient for the maintenance of his wife and children.

(6) A child aged 4 has some cultivation in his name. The annual income from the land is sufficient for his own maintenance. The child is a self-supporting person.

(7) A street singer or beggar who maintains himself by singing or begging is a self-supporting person.

Please refer to last paragraph in Question No. 10 and pay special attention to the economic status of educated persons."

#### 178-B. Part II.—Employment :

This part concerns only self-supporting persons who are employers or employees or independent workers; even among them, those exceptional cases of self-supporting persons who support themselves without gainful occupation or economic activity, (e.g., rentiers and pensioners) are not covered.

If a self-supporting person earns his principal means of livelihood as :—

an employer, write 1

an employee, write 2

an independent worker, write 3

in the second compartment. In all other cases write X here.

The last group, (i.e., X) will include earning dependants, non-earning dependants, beggars, orphans or convicts in jails, as well as all those who live entirely on their income from pension, or investments, or rent of houses, buildings or land, or interest on loans, securities or shares, and who do not employ any paid assistants for earning that income.

A person should be treated as an 'employer' only if he has necessarily to employ any person in order to carry on the business from which he secures his livelihood, provided that employee is regularly employed and derives his Principal Means of Livelihood by such employment. Part-time or casual employment which does not provide the Principal Means of livelihood of the employee should not be taken into account. A person employing a cook or other servants for domestic services is not an employer.

An 'employee' is a person who ordinarily works under some other person for a salary or wage in cash or kind, as the means of earning his livelihood. Managers, Superintendents, Agents, etc., and all Government servants should be recorded as employees only even though they may have power of employing or appointing subordinate officers or assistants.

An 'Independent worker' means a person who is not employed by anyone else and who does not employ anybody else in order to earn his livelihood.

#### Illustrations

(1) Doctors and lawyers who employ compounders or clerks, money-lenders and land-lords employing paid assistants to carry on their profession or business are all examples of employers.

(2) Carpenters, weavers, black-smiths, potters, etc., who are occasionally assisted by members of their households are not employers but independent workers.

(3) Jadhab, a clerk in D.C.'s Office, Tezpur, earns Rs. 80 per mensem. He has also 3 bighas of land in his name and engages labourers for doing work on it. His principal income is through Government services: he should be recorded as an employee and not an employer.

**178-C. Question 10.—Principal Means of Livelihood.**

This is a very important question. Please therefore, pay great care. You will have to ask every person how he makes his living and put down the answer fully and clearly on every slip.

If anyone is a self-supporting person, ask him what his source of income is. If he has only one source of income, record it here. If he has more than one source of income then the occupation which gives him the largest part of his income is his Principal Means of Livelihood and should accordingly be entered in this column. The occupation which gives him the next largest part of his income should be entered against Question No. 11.

If the person enumerated is an earning dependant or a non-earning dependant, the principal means of livelihood of the self-supporting person on whom he depends should be recorded here.

Thus the answer to Question 11 will be the same for a self-supporting person as well as for all his dependants whether earning or non-earning.

**Agricultural.**—In the case of persons whose means of livelihood is agricultural, write :—

- 1 for a person who cultivates land owned by him;
- 2 for a person who cultivates land owned by any other person;
- 3 for a person who is employed as a labourer by any other person who cultivates land, i.e., all who are merely agricultural labourers;
- 4 for a person who receives rent in cash or in kind in respect of the land which is cultivated by any other person, e.g., Zamindars and Mirashdars in Goalpara and some parts of Cachar;
- 5 for a jhum cultivator (a jhumia);

6. for a tea garden labourer. This will exclude persons working as clerks, domestic servants and mechanics in tea gardens, whose occupation should be written in full.

If you find that a person falls under two of the first four categories, note that category which provides the largest income against Question No. 10 and the second against Question 11. No notice should be taken of more than two means of livelihood in any case.

Distinction should be made between those who cultivate land and those who merely labour on the land. The man who directs the cultivation, e.g., when and where to plough, when and what to sow, reap and so on, even though he does not perform any manual labour is a cultivator. The man who merely does the manual labour but has no authority as to when and what to plough, sow and reap or direct such activity is not a cultivator, but an agricultural labourer. This distinction will enable you to determine if a minor, a blind person or a lady who has land in his or her name but gets it cultivated by labourers should fall in category 1 or category 4 described above.

**Non-Agricultural Means of Livelihood.**—In all other cases you should write clearly and fully what the person does in order to earn his livelihood and where he does it. There are 3 lines in the slip for answering this question. Use them fully avoiding vague and general terms like (i) clerk, (ii) labourer, (iii) chawkidar, (iv) service or (v) shop-keeper, but specify his exact means of livelihood, e.g.—

- (i) clerk, Sub-Deputy Collector's Office; clerk, tea garden;
- (ii) labourer in a coal mine: earth-worker; wood cutter; P. W. D. labourer: Porter at bus stand or railway station.
- (iii) village chawkidar: dakbungalow chawkidar; chawkidar in a rice mill.
- (iv) (a) Private service—motor driver or accountant, Imperial Bank; or mali  
(b) Government service—motor driver, State Transport or accountant, Gauhati Treasury or mali at Circuit House.
- (v) Specify the type of shop, e.g., grocery, stationery, cloth, tailoring, rickshaw-repairs, general stores, etc.

For a trader describe the articles in which he carries on trade and state clearly whether he is a wholesale or retail trader.<sup>1</sup> A retail trader sells to the public; a wholesale trader does not e.g., Wholesale Dealer, Cotton Piece goods; or retail trade in rice.

For a factory worker, give the name of the factory or the product it makes, e.g., coal mine, oil mill, rice mill, match factory, tea factory.

For Small Industries, if a person also sells the articles which he makes, write "maker and seller of.....", e.g., of cotton cloth, earthen pots, etc.

If a person buys milk from villages and sells it retail in a town, and another keeps his own cows and sells the milk, both sell milk, but write for the first "retail trade of milk" and for the second "keeping cows and selling milk".

If a person says he is a muga and pat (silk) worm rearer, ask which gives him the greater income. Enter that as his principal means of livelihood here in column 10 and the other in column 11.

#### 178-D. Question 11 : Secondary Means of Livelihood :

An answer to this question must be recorded on every slip.

- (i) If a self-supporting person has more than one means of livelihood, enter here that occupation which is next in importance to his principal means of livelihood recorded against Question No. 10.
- (ii) For an earning dependant, enter here the means of livelihood which provides his income.
- (iii) Non-earning dependants cannot have any secondary means of livelihood. For them write X. Also write X for a self-supporting person who has only one means of livelihood.

Use the same contractions and follow the general instruction given for Question No. 10.

#### 179. Further clarification of Economic Questionnaire :

Questions 9 and 10 were further amplified in my Census Hand-book as follows :—

##### "Question of Economic Status :

Part I—Dependency. Part II—Employment.  
P. 42—22

Part I must be answered for all persons whereas Part II requires an answer only regarding "self-supporting persons". Therefore, you should automatically write X in Part II for all persons who are not self-supporting (i.e., for whom you have written 2 or 3 in Part I).

A self-supporting person may not and need not be able to support his wife or children. It is sufficient for him to be able to support his own self in order to be recorded 1 in Part I.

There may be several cases of self-supporting persons with two equally important means of livelihood (m/1), e.g., Government service and ownership of land or tea garden. Such persons will be employees with reference to former m/1 and employer with reference to the latter. Part II, however, refers to the economic status of a person as an employer, employee or an independent worker only with reference to his principal m/1. In above cases, therefore, you should first record their principal m/1 in question 10 and then write down their status in question 9, Part II.

Give particular attention to the economic status of educated persons. A person may be matriculate and yet not be self-supporting. From a sense of prestige, pride or shame educated persons may insist on getting themselves recorded as self-supporting persons or earning dependants, even when they are unemployed and maintained entirely by their parents or family. Their true status should be ascertained and recorded in order to have a correct picture of the intelligentsia in our economic life.

#### Question 10 : Principal means of livelihood :

This was a very important question in all censuses and still more so in the present Census as it will be the basis of our tabulation scheme. A lot depends on the ability of District and Subdivisional Census Officers and charge superintendents, to train enumerators and supervisors to return a correct and exact answer to this question. Vague and general answers must be avoided at all cost. You should note carefully that the principal m/1 of earning and non-earning dependants to be recorded in question 10 is that of the individual on whom they are dependant. Please note very carefully that the answer to Question 10 will be the same for a self-supporting person as well as for all his

dependants whether earning or non-earning. Thus, if the principal m/1 of a person is recorded as "Government service—Extra Assistant Commissioner", it will be repeated as an answer to Question 10 for all his dependants. It does not mean that his dependants also are all of them Extra Assistant Commissioners, but simply that this particular job is the main source of livelihood for not merely the bread-winner of the family himself but all his dependants.

Agriculture and related activities are the means of livelihood of more than 90 per cent of the people in our State. Hence every enumerator should carefully know the six contractions in his printed Instructions. Contraction 4 does not mean only Zamindars and Mirashdars of Goalpara or Cachar. It will apply also in those Assam districts where there is no zamindari system, e.g., a clerk in the Deputy Commissioner's Office at Tezpur has some land from which he derives rent. His principal m/1 is stated by him to be Government service. Therefore, write 'Clerk, Deputy Commissioner's Office' against Question No. 10 and 4 against Question 11.

Special attention should be given in recording means of livelihood of all educated persons, more particularly when they are unemployed. If on account of any reasons they give agriculture or trade as their means of livelihood you have to ascertain if they themselves actually take active part in it, then write A after recording the answer, otherwise write B after their m/1."

Further elucidation of the scope and implications of these questions was provided in supplementary instructions in the form of questions and answers. These are extracted below :—

" I.—Census Question 9(1)—

Question 1.—In the Instructions the words are "the test is whether he secures a regular income, even though it may be small. Does the use of word 'regular' rule out persons who earn an income by seasonal employment ?

Answer.—No. The word 'regular' is used in the sense of 'non-casual'. It is not intended to be confined only to income derived from continuous employment. It also includes income derived from seasonal employment. What it does exclude is individual income accruing

casually and not constituting a source of income which is regularly depended upon.

Question 2.—The word 'self-supporting' as defined in the instructions, means any person whose income is sufficient at least for his own maintenance. Does this mean that an income sufficient for one man is self-supporting income?

What about his direct dependents—wife, children, etc.?

Answer.—Yes. The instructions mean what they say. A person must be deemed to be self-supporting, if his income (such as it is) is sufficient to support him individually at his present level of living (such as it is). He does not cease to be self-supporting merely for the reason that he, his wife and children taken together are not maintained by his own income.

If the wife and children have no income of their own, they are non-earning dependants. The instructions provide that their principal means of livelihood should be deemed in every case to be the same as that of the person on whom they are dependent. This would in most cases be the husband or father who will also be the head of the household. In those exceptional cases where the husband or father is not the head of the household, and is also not able to support anyone but himself, then the head of the household in which the non-earning dependant is living is the person on whom he (or she) is dependant.

Remember—every "family household" is (collectively) self-supporting; otherwise it would not exist. The surplus of self-supporting persons within a family household is in every case sufficient to meet the deficit on the earning and non-earning dependants in that family household.

Question (3).—In the instructions, it is recorded that if two or more members of the family household jointly cultivate land they would be classed as self-supporting or earning dependant "according to the share of income attributable to him or her". How are these shares to be assigned? What about females who, in some cases, take an active part in agricultural operations?

Answer.—The share of the income attributable to a person is what the head of the household (or whoever is the managing member)

deems it to be. No attempt should be made to make a detailed calculation of this share. All that has to be ascertained is whether (in the opinion of the head of the household or managing member) the member concerned is entitled to a share which would be sufficient to cover the cost of his own maintenance.

If the answer is 'yes', he is 'self-supporting'; if the answer is 'no', he is an 'earning dependant'.

The considerations are exactly the same whether the individual is a male or a female, an adult or a non-adult.

## II.—Census Question 9(2).

Question (4).—Are doctors and lawyers, who employ compounders and clerks independent workers or employers?

Answer.—They are employers. A doctor employs a compounder in order to relieve him of part of the work connected with the business in which he is engaged and by which he secures his livelihood. A lawyer employs a clerk for a like purpose.

Question (5).—A money-lender employs four persons to realise interest. Is he an employer or independent worker?

Answer.—He is an employer. He would be an employer even if he employed only one person, provided that person was regularly employed and derived his principal means of livelihood by such employment. Casual employment, or part-time employment which does not provide the principal means of livelihood of the person employed, should not be taken into account.

Question (6).—What is the status of tenants or zamindars who do not cultivate themselves but employ labourers?

Answer.—If they employ others they are 'employers'—provided the purpose of the employer and the nature of the employment are as stated in the answers to the two preceding questions.

Question (7).—What is the status of beggars; orphans in orphanage; convicts in jails?

Answer.—They fall in none of the three categories. Record O for them.

## III.—Census Question No. 10.

Question (8).—What is the category of a minor, a blind person or a lady who has land in his or her name but gets it cultivated by labourers—Category 1 or Category 4?

Answer.—Learn to distinguish between "cultivation of the land", and "performance of labour necessary for cultivating the land". There are, of course, millions of persons who perform both functions, but the functions are distinguishable and should be distinguished. The man who takes the responsible decisions which constitute the direction of the process of cultivation, (e.g., when and where to plough, when and what to sow, where and when to reap and so on); it is this person who should be referred to as the cultivator, even though he does not perform any manual labour whatever. The man who ploughs or sows or reaps, under the directions of someone else is not the cultivator—but a cultivating labourer, a different thing altogether.

The cultivator may be the owner of the land cultivated. In that case he is category 1, whether or not he also combines in himself the functions of a cultivating labourer.

Alternatively, the cultivator may be a lessee, an agent or manager (paid or unpaid). Even in this case it is immaterial whether this lessee or agent or manager also combines in himself, the functions of a cultivating labourer; he (the cultivator) is category 2, and the other person (the answer is category 4.)

Applying these principles, the answer to the question put depends on whether the minor, child, person, or lady does or does not actually direct the process of cultivation. If the person does this, the answer is category 1; otherwise, the answer is category 4."

## 180. Accuracy of economic data :

For purposes of ensuring accuracy of the answers obtained from people regarding the economic condition sufficient precautions were taken at all stages.

(1) Intensive training to supervisors and enumerators by superior Census Officers. In this connection my circular on training given in Census Handboek on p. 16-17 may be seen.



(2) Test enumeration : In order to give supervisors a thorough idea of all the complexities of census procedure and real questionnaire and to enable them to train their enumerators adequately, instructions were issued to every charge superintendent that he must select a convenient block or village, at some central spot in his charge and collect all his supervisors there; he must get the entire block enumerated by them as well as by the neighbouring enumerators, each doing a bit of enumeration work. This was completed by the first week of December. Reports received by me from the districts show that the test enumeration was carried out in all Subdivisions and gave an extremely valuable field training to the Census staff. I personally checked up as many pads used in test enumeration as I could in my intensive tours on the eve of Census operations. This test enumeration is responsible for our economic data being more accurate than they would otherwise have been.

(3) Press conferences were addressed by me in my tours. The attitude of the press was uniformly friendly and it gave full publicity to the news and data given out for information. They also gave wide publicity to nearly a dozen broadcasts on the Shillong Station of the All India Radio explaining the significance and nature of the 1951 Census.

(4) Radio was pressed into service to disseminate the true doctrine. The Governor of Assam kindly gave a broadcast on the Census Operations just a week before they began. The Chief Minister gave a personal message on the importance of the Census on 9th February, which was widely circulated (reproduced in the Administration Report).

(5) All political parties, especially the premier national organization of the State, the Indian National Congress in Assam through the A.P.C.C. extended their whole-hearted cooperation and support in popularising the procedure and the questionnaire. Booklets of instructions to enumerators were distributed to the Congress Committees in the villages for public information.

(6) All officers in charge of census work at my instance laid particular stress on the census economic enquiry while explaining the importance of census to the people in the villages they toured.

(7) During my intensive tours I made it a point to lay particular stress on the economic questions and checked personally many entries in respect of the economic questions made during the test enumeration. Even after the operations began I toured in various areas to check up the work done till then and was happy to find that the economic data was by then properly understood and recorded properly on the census pads.

(8) With a view to minimize mistakes in the economic classification at the Tabulation Office, simplified instructions were issued to the Tabulation supervisors so that the recorded data was correctly tabulated.

#### 181. Extent of the accuracy of the Census data:

The district officers generally complained that instructions to questions 9, 10 and 11 were difficult to understand by enumerators in spite of all our efforts to reduce them to the utmost simplicity and clarity. One District Officer plaintively writes, "The trouble is that when things are explained to the enumerators in a class they understand it then and return correct answers even when questioned but the trouble is that when they go away from the class they do exactly the opposite of what they claimed to have understood". The definition of self-supporting persons and non-earning dependants are clear enough and the returns on this point may be taken as fairly accurate. I am however, unable to give the same assurance regarding the figures of earning dependants. Though an ordinary enumerator was not to use his individual discretion or judgement in finding out whether a person was earning dependant or non-earning dependant, it being left solely to the person enumerated or to the head of his household to judge whether the portion of the joint family income which he contributed in earning was sufficient for his own maintenance, or not. If the head of the household was present then his judgment was to be accepted as final about the respective shares of persons participating in joint cultivation. The enumerator was not to make any detailed calculation of these shares. In spite of all these categorical instructions I have no doubt that many an enumerator must have arrogated to himself the discretion which was expressly taken away and put down a person as an earning dependant or a non-earning dependant according to his own sense

of judgment and propriety. In order to find out the general trend of treatment of the economic status of persons I circularised the following 4 sets of questions to every district and subdivision inviting opinion about the general classification of the categories mentioned therein in each, a, b, c and d.

(a) Father is old but possesses land which the sons cultivate and do all other agricultural operations on his behalf. Have the sons been shown as 'self-supporting', 'wholly dependant' or 'earning dependant'.

(b) Wife has got some property of her own or helps her husband actively in agriculture which can make her self-supporting or brings about ten or twelve rupees per month. In such a case has the wife been shown as fully dependant, or self-supporting or earning dependant.

(c) Father is dead but the property has not been divided. How have the co-sharers been shown, as self-supporting, or fully dependant on the head of the family, or earning dependants? How have they been treated when the property left behind is large, and when it is small.

(d) How has a person who is maintained on the joint earnings of three or four persons, for instance, say, widowed sister who lives in the family of her three brothers all of whom earn, been shown? And on whose earnings such a person is shown 'dependant' in Question 10. State the general principles accepted in your district in regard to the above cases and similar cases. State whether answers in all parts of the district have been uniform, whether interpretation has been right or wrong. State areas in which general principles have been departed from and the population involved.

The general trend of answers reveal that the enumerators had no difficulty in understanding these categories and most districts have returned the answers as given below. These are included here so that one can know precisely in which class certain marginal categories have been included and under what circumstances.

(a) Sons have been shown self-supporting if the income is sufficient for the maintenance of each; otherwise they were shown as earning dependants.

(b) If the wife's income from her personal property is sufficient to maintain her she has been shown as self-supporting; if insufficient, then earning dependant.

(c) Self-supporting, if property left behind is large and sufficient for the maintenance of all co-sharers. Where the property was small the head of the family was shown as self-supporting and others treated as dependant on him in case they had no other earnings.

(d) The means of livelihood of the widowed sister has been shown as that of the head of the family who is the eldest brother.

These were treated as non-earning dependants unless some light or clue was available from the National Register of Citizens.

Thus it is clear that the answers to question 9, Part I are fairly accurate in most cases. Strenuous efforts were made by the enumerators to get correct answers in the case of illiterate joint families. The percentage of mistakes in respect of answers to Question 9, Part II, was comparatively larger but as most of these were noticed in respect of agriculturists these had little significance because the agriculturists are not classified on the basis of this part of the Questionnaire.

During the census holidays it was discovered that in the case of several earning dependants there was no entry against question 11. Answers to question 10 were almost invariably written at length and left little scope for any misunderstanding or misclassification about the principal means of livelihood. On account of the greatly increased emphasis on the importance of this question, the returns are as accurate as one can hope and more so than at the previous censuses on account of the fact that we had an additional check-up in the National Register of Citizens to fill up any entries in those rare cases in which they were wanting.

The secondary means of livelihood were as carefully recorded in actual practice as answers to question 10. Only the most important of the secondary means of livelihood was recorded if any person had more than one. Here, as in all other cases, the responsibility to judge their relative importance was taken out of the hands of the enumerators and placed squarely on the shoulders of those enumerated. They were to judge which among the number of subsidiary occupations gave them the second largest income.

This was to be written in Q. 11. Thus the returns regarding the means of livelihood of earning dependants are subject to this vital qualification, that an earning dependant can have more than one subsidiary means of livelihood though the Census had taken into account only one of them. For example, many a cultivator's wife in Assam not merely looks after the house and cooks meals and rears children but devotes her spare time to weaving, as also helping her husband in cultivation particularly transplanting rice seedling, reaping the crop, thrashing and paddy husking. It was her discretion whether she should return her secondary means of livelihood as agriculture or weaving.

This would inflate or deflate the returns under agriculture or industry as secondary means of livelihood, according as her preference was for one or the other. In view of this the actual statistics, particularly of the secondary means of livelihood of earning dependants must be accepted with a certain amount of reservation. It is likely that the differences between various districts may be often due to the individual idiosyncracies of the enumerators that to a real distinction. An indirect proof of the accuracy of the economic data is available from the fact that in spite of the option given by the Registrar General to make separate entries of unqualifiable persons under various categories I had rarely any occasion to exercise this discretion.

#### 182. Rectification of an unconscious departure from All India pattern in livelihood classes:

At first the following definitions of 'land owned' and 'land rented' were adopted on the basis of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation at the instance of the Assam Government. 'Land owned' means land held directly under Government on permanent settlement or under period, annual or special lease, (e.g., Lakhiraj, Nisf-Khiraj, Fee Simple, 45 years, '99 years, N. L. R. grant lease and lease for special cultivation).

'Land rented' means the amount of land held by a person under another person (i.e., not directly under the Government), on payment of rent in cash or in kind or on service, under an agreement written or verbal. The person may hold such land for any period from a few months to a number of years, with or without occupancy rights, or on adhi-bhagi or chukti-bhagi terms. Land may be held as bargadar on terms of

sharing of produce. The enumerator was referred to this definition in order to decide who was to be included in Class I and Class II. At the Census Conference in December 1950, which took stock of the enumeration arrangements on the eve of the Census, it was discovered that if the above definitions were adopted they would mean a departure from the all-India practice and policy at least with regard to the permanently settled areas of Assam, viz., the Karimganj subdivision of Cachar and the Goalpara district. Immediately on my return from the Census Conference I took up the matter with the Revenue Department and in consultation with it a correction slip was issued to the booklet of instructions to Enumerators asking them to delete any reference to the definition of 'land owned' and 'land rented' given in Q. 13 and to adopt in stead the following definition.

**"The word 'owned' used in relation to land includes every tenure which involves the right of permanent occupancy of land for purposes of cultivation. Such right should be heritable; it may be but need not necessarily be also transferable. All raiyats, tenants and jotedars having occupancy rights will be included under 1."**

According to the revised instructions only patta-holders, bargadars, adhiars, ejaradars and raiyats, jotedars or tenants who have any occupancy rights will be included under 2. This was further clarified by stating categorically that the definitions of land owned and land rented given in Q. 13 do not apply to Q. 10. Thus Q. 10 is concerned mainly with occupancy and non-occupancy, while Q. 13 makes a distinction between the proprietors and the tenants. Thus annual pattaholders will fall under the category of owners for the purpose of Q. 13 but in Q. 10 they will be recorded under category 2, viz., non-owning cultivators. Tenants, jotedars and raiyats with occupancy rights are treated as tenants for Q. 13 but they will be treated as cultivating owners and recorded as 1 in Q. 10. In temporarily settled areas of Assam there are certain classes of tenants, called privileged tenants and occupancy tenants, e.g., cultivators enjoying temple land who are called privileged tenants. All of them will be recorded as 1 cultivating owners in Q. 10 though they feature under land rented in Q. 13.

In Assam permanent settlement or landlordism is prevalent only in the district of Goalpara and Karimganj subdivision in the district of

Cachar. The rest of Assam Plains is under permanent settlement. Assam Land and Revenue Regulation does not apply in the case of Assam Hills; they have no system of land tenure, permanent or temporary. We can say roughly that the land in Hills belongs to the tribes or villagers and is owned by the community, not by individuals. The personal attention of the District Officers of Karimganj, Cachar, Goalpara and Dhubri was drawn to these changed instructions immediately on my return, from the conference. I must say that, under their able leadership, the energetic census staff in the districts of Cachar and Goalpara, did go all out succeeded in putting the revised instructions through. That this is not a mere guess or pious hope was evident when I toured Cachar and Goalpara for a final check-up in January visiting practically every single moufussil centre from the early hours of the morning till late at night, getting abundant proofs that the enumerators did get the hang of the revised instructions. Even after the census operations began I singled out these 2 districts for my personal verification and was gratified to learn that the entries were in consonance with the revised instructions. A more thorough check-up at the tabulation stage confirmed the same impression. Thus the returns in Assam are entirely in line with those of the rest of India—a result for which I am deeply grateful to the whole census staff of these two districts, particularly their energetic district and subdivisional officers.

### 183. Comparison of economic data collected at different Censuses :

At the 1921 Census there was an additional column for dependants as follows:—"Col. 11 (Means of subsistence of dependants).—For Children and women and old or infirm persons who do not work either personally or by means of servants, enter the principal occupation of the person who supports them. This column will be blank for actual workers". For the latter, there was a separate column No. 9 which recorded the principal occupation of workers, who actually work or carry on business, whether personally or by means of servants, or who live on house-rent, pension, etc. The object of col. 11 was clear: to obtain the number of persons supported by each occupation, apart from the workers. But many blanks, or entries of the word 'dependant' and of the relationship to the supporter were

found. Certain entries were corrected at compilation stage by reference to the other entries for the house in the original papers. At 1921, the occupation of working dependant was not recorded, the object being to ascertain the number of persons supported by each occupation. In the 1921 Census Report, the discussion was largely based upon the total number of persons who were supported by certain occupations or industry whether as earners or dependants. For the 1931 Census we have no information as to the number supported by any particular occupation; all we know is (1) the number of persons of each sex who earn their living by working at a particular occupation, (2) the number of earners under each occupation, who have subsidiary occupations, (3) the number of dependants who, though dependants, actually assist in the work of the family without earning wages and (4) the number of non-earning dependants. In 1931 the principal means of livelihood of the dependants was not recorded. If they at all had any occupation that was recorded as the secondary means of livelihood. Thus (1) above corresponds the self-supporting persons of the 1951 Census; (2) equals self-supporting persons with secondary means of livelihood; (3) 1951 Census introduces a more refined concept, i.e., those who are dependants assisting in the work of the family without earning wages may be included under self-supporting or atleast as earning dependants but never as non-earning dependants; Class (4) above corresponds to the non-earning dependants of the 1951 Census.

The principal change brought about by the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme 1951 is the setting up on a comprehensive economic classification of the people as a whole and not merely those who are engaged in gainful occupation. Commenting on the inadequate Census Classification in the past, Chandrashekhar says, "There are no reliable or complete statistics available regarding the classification of the total population according to occupations. The 1941 Census has omitted such a classification, while the 1931 Census gives classification only for the persons following occupations, (i.e., earners plus working dependants plus those following callings as subsidiary occupations). The rest of the population which is numerically larger representing mainly non-working dependants, remains unclassified, and there is no way of classifying them in terms of their occupation

except by inference, on the precarious assumption that the proportion of non-working dependants to workers is constant throughout".\*

Detailed comparison of the occupational figures of the 1931 Census with those of the 1951 Census data is not practicable on account of the change in the method of classification already referred to. Tentative comparison on the basis of approximate livelihood classification is, however, made in Subsidiary Table 5.6 given in Part I-B of the Report. As the occupational pattern of Assam has been considerably modified by the reduction of population numbering 2,825,282 within the major portion of the district of Sylhet which has gone to Pakistan, it is neither feasible nor practicable to make comparison between the figures of 1931 and 1951 Censuses. The area and population which has gone into Pakistan were all under permanent settlement, in which the tea industry was of smaller importance than in the rest of the Assam Plains; separate occupational figures for these are not available. Hence it is not possible to compare the occupational pattern of 1951 Assam as now constituted with that of 1931 Assam whose economic pattern on account of the inclusion of Sylhet was very different for a sizeable proportion, viz., nearly one-third of its present population.

Again the definitions of 'cultivating owners' and 'dependant cultivators' adopted at the 1931 Census classification were very different from those adopted at the 1951 Census for these legal concepts which were in line with the definitions which were first adopted at the instance of the Government; but which, as we have already seen, were changed to bring them in line with the all India definitions of land owners which included occupancy tenants under the category of owners cultivators.

#### 184. Comparison with 1931 classification:

Subsidiary Table 5.6 given in Part I-B of the Report shows the comparison of the livelihood classes of the 1951 Census with the occupational groups of 1931 Census. The fly-leaf to the table gives the details of the groups of 1931 Census, which correspond to different livelihood classes of 1951. It will be observed that the four agricultural livelihood classes correspond to the occupational groups of 1931 as shown in Table 4.1, which follows:—

TABLE 4.1

*Correspondence between Livelihood Classes I to IV of the 1951 Census to the occupational groups of 1931*

Livelihood class of 1951 Census	Corresponding occupational groups of 1931 Census
I. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned; and their dependants.	5. Cultivating owners. 8. Cultivation of Jhum and shifting areas. (there were no entries in 1931 Census under this head).
II. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned; and their dependants.	6. Tenant Cultivators.
III. Cultivating labourers; and their dependants.	7. Agricultural Labourers.
IV. Non-cultivating owners of land; agricultural rent receivers; and their dependants.	1. Non-cultivating population taking rent in money or kind.

It is to be noted that the categories of agriculture in 1931 not only included the above five occupational groups corresponding to the four agricultural livelihood classes, but 11 other occupational groups which are now included in the different livelihood classes of industries and services as shown in Table 4.2 below:—

TABLE 4.2

*Agricultural occupation groups of 1931 Census corresponding to livelihood classes V and VIII of 1951*

Livelihood class 1951 Census	Occupational group of 1931 Census	Division of Industries and service of 1951 Census
V.—Production other than cultivation.	(9) Cinchona plantation. (10) Cocoanut „ „ (11) Coffee „ „ (12) Ganja „ „ (13) Pan vine „ „ (14) Rubber „ „ (15) Tea „ „ (16) Market Gardeners, Flower and fruit growers.	0.3—Plantation Industries—Owners Managers and Workers.
VIII.—Other Services and miscellaneous sources.	(2) Estate Agents and Managers or owners. (4) Rent Collectors, Clerks, etc. (3) Estate Agents and Managers of Government.	9.0 Services otherwise unclassified. 8.7 Employeee of State Governments.

\* S. Chandrasekhar—India's Population, Fact and Policy.

## SECTION II.

### AGRICULTURAL POPULATION RATIOS, SELF-SUPPORTING PERSONS AND DEPENDANTS; SECONDARY MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD OF AGRICULTURAL CLASSES

#### 185. Proportion of Agricultural Classes to General Population :

A perusal of Subsidiary Table 4.1 given in Part I-B of the report gives the percentage of general population belonging to the Agricultural Classes in the State and in its different parts. The position in the Natural Divisions is summarised below :—

State/Natural Division	Percentage
Assam	73.3
Assam Plains	71.5
Assam Hills	84.9

We have already discussed the broad pattern of the economic life of the State and its Natural Divisions and its salient features in the districts, in Chapter I, Section 6. There is no need to repeat the discussion except to emphasize :

- (i) The overwhelmingly agricultural condition of Assam where both in the State as well as its Natural Divisions, over 75 per cent of people follow agriculture.
- (ii) Assam Hills depend far more on agriculture than the Plains.

One more fact has to be borne in mind, viz., that these figures flatter Assam unnecessarily in that the portion of Assam's population dependent on the Tea industry which itself is largely rural and agricultural is not included herein. If about 10 per cent are added to agriculture in the Plains and the State percentage, it would jump to 83.3 in Assam and 81 in Assam Plains. Assam Hills will still be more agricultural than Assam Plains. We have already seen how Nowgong and Goalpara are the two most agricultural plains districts in Assam Hills; those least dependant on agriculture are Lakhimpur and Cachar in the Plains and the United K. & J. Hills in Assam Hills.

#### 186. Dependency amongst Agricultural Classes :

The following statement based on the figures in columns 3 to of 5 Subsidiary Table 4.1 shows the percentage of self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants

in all Agricultural Classes in Assam and its Natural Divisions. The pattern for Assam and Assam Plains is practically the same.

TABLE 4.3

*Percentage of self-supporting persons, earning dependants and Non-earning dependants in the population of Agricultural Classes in Assam and its Natural Divisions*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam	24.5	58.5	17.0
Assam Plains	23.1	59.9	17.0
Assam Hills	31.8	50.9	17.3

A very significant fact is brought about by Table 4.3, viz., nearly three fifths of the total agricultural population (58.5 per cent) of Assam are just doing nothing; about one-fifth of the total agricultural population is self-supporting with 17 per cent returned as earning dependants. The proportion of the earning dependants for Assam Plains is identical with that of the State as a whole. The dependency pattern of the Hills bears similarity to that of Assam and Assam Plains only so far as earning dependants are concerned. In Assam Hills 17.3 per cent are returned as earning dependants. The non-earning dependants, however, in Assam Hills are far fewer, only one half or 50.9 per cent, a far smaller percentage than in either Assam Plains (59.9) or the whole State (58.5); whereas self-supporting persons are almost one-third of the total population against less than one-fourth in Assam Plains.

In Assam Plains, Cachar has the largest percentage of non-earning dependants 67.6 (against 55.2 in Darrang) and the smallest percentage of earning dependants 10.5 against the Plains average of 17 (21.8 in Lakhimpur). In Assam Hills the range of variation is smaller. Garo Hills shows the smallest percentage of self-supporting persons 22.4 against 38.2 in the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district; the former also



shows by far the largest percentage of non-earning dependants 57.6 against only 44.9 in Naga Hills. Earning Dependants are most numerous in Naga Hills 21.7 against 12.7 in Lushai Hills.

### 187. Causes of the larger dependency in Assam Plains :

For a possible explanation of much higher

dependency in Assam Plains (76.9 per cent) as contrasted with that of Assam Hills (68.2 per cent) let us examine the composition of the population according to the age as given in Subsidiary Tables 6.9 to 6.14 in Part I-B of the report. The following Table gives the abstracted statistics from these Tables for Assam and its Natural Divisions.

TABLE 4.4

*Distribution of 10,000 persons of Agricultural Classes by age groups in Assam and its Natural Divisions*

Age Group	Assam	Assam Plains	Assam Hills	Cachar	Nowgong	Darrang
Infants (below 1 year)	333	348	249	300	396	359
Young children (1-4)	1,343	1,350	1,308	1,301	1,281	1,355
Boys and Girls (5-14)	2,715	2,729	2,634	2,761	2,628	2,676
Young men and Women (15-34)	3,229	3,218	3,293	3,214	3,114	3,305
Middle aged persons (35-54)	1,758	1,747	1,819	1,763	2,052	1,796
Elderly persons (55 and above)	610	599	667	651	849	511

From the table given above it is clear that the total number of infants and young children per 10,000 persons of Agricultural Classes for Assam and its Natural Divisions are as follows :—

1. Assam 1,676
2. Assam Plains 1,698
3. Assam Hills 1,557
4. Cachar 1,601
5. Nowgong 1,677
6. Darrang 1,714

These figures show that the number of persons who are likely to be dependent on account of their age is larger in Assam Plains than in the Hills. As the percentage difference in this dependency age group is only of the order of 1.4 between the two Natural Divisions, the age composition only partially accounts for the high percentage of dependency in Assam Hills. Taking into consideration elderly persons, i.e., those above 55, does not throw any further light on the problem.

In an attempt to examine further the matter we can add the numbers of earning dependants to non-earning dependants in order to arrive at the total figures of dependency. This line of approach, however, brings us no result because the difference between non-earning dependants in Assam Plains and Assam Hills is utterly insignificant. It is, therefore, clear that the explanation for the considerable difference in the percentage of non-earning dependants or the total dependants (earning plus non-earning combined) in the two Natural Divisions lies elsewhere.

I can only briefly touch upon it here. In Assam Plains education is far more wide-spread than anywhere in the Assam Hills which should account for the much larger proportion of the children as well as boys and girls being sent to school, thereby effectively increasing the number of non-earning dependants in Assam Plains. One of the main explanation, however, appears to be the sense of social pride and prestige among the people of the Plains whose wives and daughters do not work in agriculture to the same extent as in the Hills. Of course, this is not to under-rate the contribution made by the womenfolk of the Assamese to the cultivation of their lands. In the Hills where such taboos are not prevalent at all the whole village or tribe turns out for jhuming, their primitive form of agriculture. Their traditions of participation in the entire economic and social life of the tribe are age-old and firmly established, enabling children and young persons to take their share of the economic responsibilities at a much earlier age. Women also take their full share. This factor is re-inforced by the difference in the land tenure systems in the two Divisions. In the Hills individuals do not have any rights in the land, which is owned by the community, village or tribe. Hence, the adult sons and daughters particularly the latter as well as the womenfolk have much greater opportunities of working in the fields and becoming self-supporting or earning dependants to a far greater extent than their counterparts in the Plains can ever be. These appear to be the reasons for the much greater



dependency in Assam Plains and correspondingly greater proportion of self-supporting persons in Assam Hills.

Let us examine the figures for some districts, e.g., Nowgong, Darrang and Cachar, given in Table 4.4. Here again we find that the percentage of infants and children who are likely to be dependants by the mere fact of age, is only 16.0 in Cachar, 16.7 in Nowgong and 17.1 in Darrang. Darrang returns the smallest proportion of non-earning dependants (55.2 per cent) but has the largest proportion of infants and children combined than the other two. Thus we see how little age composition has to do with the phenomenon of dependency among the agricultural classes. In Cachar and Nowgong the taboo on the participation of the work of women and children in the fields is much greater than in the case of Darrang and the Hills. In Cachar only among the Manipuris and the few tribals we find women working. On the contrary Darrang being in Assam Valley has old traditions of womenfolk joining their men in the fields just as in the Hills.

#### 188. Dependency in Assam compared with Part 'A' States of India :

TABLE 4.5  
*Percentage distribution of all Agricultural Classes according to Dependency*

State	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
India	28.7	59.6	11.7
Assam	24.5	58.5	17.0
Uttar Pradesh	29.7	56.1	14.7
Bihar	31.9	64.0	4.1
West Bengal	26.0	69.8	4.2
Madras	25.8	69.1	5.1
Bombay	24.6	54.6	20.8
Madhya Pradesh	30.0	41.1	28.9
Punjab	26.8	58.4	14.8
Orissa	27.8	62.3	9.9

The proportion of self-supporting persons in India is 28.7 against 24.5 in Assam. We immediately discover an interesting fact from the above table, viz., that the proportion of self-supporting persons in Assam is the lowest in India, against the highest 31.9 in Bihar, 30.0 in Madhya Pradesh and 29.7 in Uttar Pradesh. The percentage of self-supporting persons in backward Assam is almost identical with that of one of

the most progressive States, viz., Bombay. Among the non-earning dependants, against the all India average of 59.6 per cent, Assam occupies a middle position with West Bengal 69.8 and Madras 69.1 on the one side and Bombay 54.6 and Madhya Pradesh 41.1 on the other. Though the percentage of non-earning dependants in Assam is about the same as that of India as a whole, regarding earning dependants, however, Assam with 17.0 per cent greatly exceeds India's 11.7. Madhya Pradesh 28.9 and Bombay 20.8 are the only States which surpass Assam in this respect. Earning Dependants are as few as 4.1 and 4.2 in Bihar and West Bengal respectively.

#### 189. Secondary means of livelihood of self-supporting Persons and Earning Dependants in Individual Agricultural Classes compared :

Before I proceed to analyse the secondary means of livelihood of the actual working population among the Agricultural Classes it is desirable to examine the percentage of people in the different Agricultural Livelihood Classes who have a secondary source of income. The following table shows the percentage of self-supporting persons with secondary means of livelihood to the population of the particular livelihood class and a similar percentage of the earning dependants in each of the four Agricultural Livelihood Classes in Assam.

TABLE 4.6

*Proportion of self-supporting persons with secondary means of livelihood and of earning dependants in each Agricultural Livelihood Class*

Livelihood Class	PERCENTAGE TO THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE CLASS OF		
	Self-supporting persons with a secondary means of livelihood	Earning dependants	Total
I.—Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned.	3.4	17.1	20.5
II.—Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned.	4.2	17.4	21.6
III.—Cultivating labourers	5.2	14.2	19.4
IV.—Non-cultivating owners of land ; agricultural rent receivers.	9.5	10.8	20.3

It is interesting to observe that the largest percentage of people with secondary means of livelihood is to be found in Livelihood Class II (21.6), while it is the lowest (19.4) in Livelihood Class III. Class IV shows a peculiar feature, viz., that the percentage of self-supporting persons having a secondary means of livelihood is very nearly the same as the percentage of the earning dependants, whereas in Livelihood Class I the percentage of self-supporting persons having a secondary means of livelihood is about one-fifth of the percentage of earning dependants; it is about one-fourth in Class II and one-third in Class III. The reason is obvious. The self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class IV have ample time at their disposal to be able to undertake subsidiary occupations because they are the non-cultivating owners of land whose main business is to receive the rent. While spending the same in towns or elsewhere, they have ample leisure to supplement their income by a secondary means of livelihood. In the case of other three Livelihood Classes, particularly Class III, this is not the case. They have to work to earn their principal means of livelihood and have to put in additional effort to supplement their income by undertaking other occupations.

#### 190. Secondary Means of Livelihood of Working Agricultural Population :

The following table 4.7 gives the distribution of 1,000 self-supporting persons and earning dependants belonging to all Agricultural Classes into 8 Livelihood Classes according to their secondary means of livelihood.

TABLE 4.7

*Sources of secondary income of economically active and semi-active persons in Agriculture in Assam*

Number per 1,000 self-supporting persons and earning dependants who derive a secondary means of livelihood from :—	
I—Cultivations of owned land	237
II—Cultivation of unowned land	61
III—Employment as cultivating labourer.	26
IV—Rent on agricultural land.	2
V—Production other than Cultivation.	90
VI—Commerce.	27
VII—Transport.	4
VIII—Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources.	44
All classes.	491

It is interesting to observe from the above table that only 491 persons out of 1,000 self-supporting persons and earning dependants of all the agricultural classes have a secondary means of livelihood. In other words, only about half of the working population of agricultural classes or 49.1 per cent have a supplementary source of income. Also we see that this 49.1 per cent of people include nearly 32.6 per cent of those who again have for their secondary means of livelihood one of the agricultural activities. This means that only about 16.5 per cent of the working population of the agricultural classes have taken to occupations other than agriculture to supplement their earnings from agriculture. Such abnormal dependence on agriculture cannot but be viewed with misgiving. It shows how the huge population belonging to the agricultural classes depends almost entirely on agriculture and has hardly any other supplementary source of income with the result that in the time of fall in agricultural prices, as was witnessed during the Great Depression of 1928-32 or unfavourable seasons due to floods or drought, they have no other means of keeping up their standard of living except running into debt. The necessity of introducing cottage industries and other non-agricultural occupations amongst the agricultural classes cannot, therefore, be overstressed.

Though the position as revealed above is anything but happy, we must admit that due to the wide-spread tea industry as also the practice of weaving adopted by all indigenous persons, the dependence on Agriculture as Principal or Subsidiary means of livelihood and the consequent sufferings from the vagaries of the monsoon is much less in Assam than in many other States of India. For example in Madhya Pradesh, though the percentage of working population of all agricultural classes having a secondary means of livelihood is as high as 61, nearly 50 per cent of them have their secondary means of livelihood one of the agricultural activities. It means that only about 11 per cent of the working population of the agricultural classes in that State have taken to occupations other than agriculture to supplement their earnings from agriculture. No wonder Shri Kerawala, the Census Superintendent, Madhya Pradesh, finds such abnormal dependence on agriculture, to say the least, alarming

Though we in Assam are happier in this respect, we must not relax our efforts to increase cottage industries, etc., to supplement the income of agricultural classes and to lessen their dependence on seasons.

#### 190-A. Secondary Means of Livelihood of all Agricultural Classes :

Though not prescribed by the Registrar General, I have prepared an additional Subsidiary Table 4.1A on lines similar to Tables 4.2 to 4.5. It gives secondary means of Livelihood of 10,000 persons of all Agricultural Classes. Overall detailed figures of the Secondary Means of Livelihood of Agricultural Classes for the General, Rural and Urban Population of the State, Natural Divisions and the districts will be found in the main Economic Table B-II (Secondary Means of Livelihood), given in Part II-B of the Report.

It is interesting to observe that amongst the Agricultural Classes in Assam only 20.4 per cent of the people have a secondary source of income, of whom 17 per cent are earning dependants, and the rest (3.4 per cent), are self-supporting persons. In Madhya Pradesh, the total percentage is as high as 36 (29 per cent earning dependants and 7 per cent self-supporting persons). Out of the total, 13.5 per cent have returned one or the other form of agriculture itself as their secondary means of liveli-

hood; only 6.9 per cent of the people have other types of secondary sources of income. Of these 6.9 per cent, 3.7 per cent only get subsidiary employment in some kind of industry of Livelihood Class V which also includes such industries allied to Agriculture as stock-raising, forestry, breeding of small animals, tea plantation, etc. In Assam Plains, out of 20.3 per cent of the people of All Agricultural Classes, who have a secondary means of livelihood, 13 per cent show Agriculture itself, and only 7.3 per cent Non-Agriculture (4 per cent in production other than cultivation alone). In Assam Hills, the predominance of farm agriculture as a secondary means of livelihood of the people is even greater, viz., 16.7 per cent leaving only 3.8 per cent for Non-Agriculture (2.3 per cent for Class V).

A break-down of the analysis of Secondary Means of Livelihood of Agricultural Classes for the self-supporting persons and earning dependants separately is given below.

#### 190-B. Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of all Agricultural Classes.

Table 4.7 A given below gives a statement regarding the Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of all Agricultural Classes.

TABLE 4.7A

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons per 10,000 persons of all Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons, per 10,000 persons of all agricultural classes, deriving a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	14	26	15	3	98	72	8	98	334
Assam Plains ..	12	29	7	3	92	81	9	102	334
Assam Hills ..	25	11	57	1	129	24	1	73	321
Manipur ..	9	12	4	8	379	55	3	46	516
Tripura ..	36	91	83	35	119	103	27	177	671

In Assam only 334 self-supporting persons out of every 10,000 persons belonging to all Agricultural Classes combined have a secondary means of Livelihood. For them, the two most important secondary means of Livelihood are Production other than Cultivation and Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources, followed by Commerce; each of them is of greater significance in this connection than all the Agricultural Classes combined. The same holds true for Assam Plains, but not for Assam Hills. In Assam Hills, Production other than Cultivation is by far the most important,

followed by Other services and miscellaneous sources; then comes employment as Agricultural Labourers and Cultivation of owned land, before Commerce comes into the picture.

#### 190-C. Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of all Agricultural Classes :

The following Table 4.7B gives a break-up of the Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants in the Agricultural Classes.

TABLE 4.7B

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants per 10,000 persons of all Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	Number of earning dependants, per 10,000 persons of all agricultural classes, deriving a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Assam ..	968	229	94	4	276	38	7	87
Assam Plains ..	881	263	96	4	309	42	8	94
Assam Hills ..	1,435	52	81	2	101	16	1	44
Manipur ..	973	176	7	9	1,139	92	4	50
Tripura ..	647	89	170	30	223	73	17	144
								<b>Total</b>
								1,703
								1,697
								1,732
								2,450
								1,393

Table 4.7B makes it crystal clear that cultivation of owned land is the most important secondary means of Livelihood of earning dependants of all Agricultural Classes. It is followed by Production other than cultivation, Cultivation of unowned land and employment as agricultural labourers.

#### 191. Manipur :

83.4 per cent of the General Population belongs to Agricultural Classes. Out of the total agricultural population of Manipur nearly nine-tenths (85.3 per cent) falls under Class I; Class II is slightly over onetenth. Classes III and IV together account for 2.7 per cent of the total agricultural population out of which Class III barely accounts for one-third per cent. 48 per cent of the total agricultural population are non-earning dependants 25 per cent are earning dependants while self-supporting persons constitute nearly 27.2 per cent, a proportion, far higher than that in Assam Plains but lower than that in Assam Hills. The population of earning dependants in Manipur is only slightly less than double that in Tripura and also considerably higher than that in Assam or any of its Natural Divisions.

5.2 per cent of the total population of all agricultural classes has a secondary means of livelihood, and out of it nearly 3.8 per cent derives a secondary means of livelihood from Production other than cultivation, reflecting the importance of the traditional weaving industry of Manipur as a great source of secondary support for the Manipuris. All other classes are equally insignificant from this point of view, only Classes VI and VIII being less so. For earning dependants also Class V is of equal importance. Out of a total of 24.5 per cent of earning dependants, as much as 11.4 per cent derive their secondary income from Livelihood Class V; Class I is a near rival with 9.7 per cent followed by Class II, 1.8.

#### 192. Tripura :

Tripura is less agricultural than Manipur, its agricultural population being only 75.3 per cent of its total population as against 83.4 per cent of agricultural population in Manipur. The distribution of its total agricultural population under different Agricultural Classes is as follows :—

Class I, 79.5 per cent followed by Class II 11.6, Class III, 6.4 and Class IV, 2.5.

Its pattern does resemble more that of Assam Plains Division, whereas that of Manipur strikingly resembles that of Assam Hills Division. 55 per cent of the people of Tripura are non-earning dependants. 31 per cent, same as in Assam Hills Division, are self-supporting persons but nearly 14 per cent earning dependants, a proportion far lower than that in Assam or its Natural Divisions and nearly half of that in Manipur.

Tripura has 6.7 per cent of the total population of its agricultural classes enjoying a percentage higher than Assam and its Natural Divisions as well as that of Manipur. The figure for secondary means of livelihood does not show any overwhelming importance or lack of the same for any Class. Class VIII, however, enjoys a small primacy followed by Classes V and VI. Employment as agricultural labourers enjoys almost the same importance as that of Cultivation of unowned land. Tripura has the smallest percentage of earning dependants. Amongst them there is no overwhelming primacy of either Class V as in the case of Manipur or Class I as in the case of Assam and its Natural Divisions. Of course, Class I forms the largest single group but it contains less than 50 per cent of the total number of earning dependants (647 out of 1,393). It is followed by Production other than Cultivation, employment as agricultural labourers and Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources.

SECTION III

RELATIVE PROPORTIONS OF DIFFERENT AGRICULTURAL CLASSES: CORRELATED  
TO DISTRIBUTION OF LAND IN AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS OF  
DIFFERENT SIZES

193. **Relative Proportions of Different Agricultural Classes in Assam and its Natural Divisions :**

A perusal of Table 4.8 given below, which is based upon Subsidiary Table 4.1, shows that 78.9 per cent of the population of Agricultural Classes belongs to Livelihood Class I (Cultivators of owned land) whereas 17.5 belongs to Livelihood Class II (Cultivating tenants). Agricultural labourers and non-cultivating owners of land are comparatively insignificant in Assam, comprising just 2.4 and 1.2 per cent of the agricultural population respectively. We can, therefore, say that in Assam there are only two main agricultural classes; Class I forming very nearly four-fifths of the entire agricultural population and Class II the remaining one-fifth; Classes III and IV like rare gases in the atmosphere can almost be ignored, considering their numbers and significance. The percentages in the case of Assam Plains for these two main livelihood Classes are 76.6 for Class I and 19.8 for Class II whereas in the Hills they are 91.1 and 5.1, respectively. Thus both in the Hills and the Plains, Cultivating owners and tenants form over 95 per cent of the entire population of all agricultural classes combined.

TABLE 4.8.

*Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Classes into different Livelihood Classes*

State and Natural Division	Percentage of all agricultural classes belonging to livelihood class			
	I	II	III	IV
	Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned	Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned	Agricultural labourers	Non-cultivating owners of land, and agricultural rent receivers
Assam	78.9	17.5	2.4	1.2
Assam Plains	76.7	19.8	2.2	1.3
Assam Hills	91.1	5.1	3.2	0.6

Assam Hills are more agricultural than Assam Plains, but the phenomenon of tenancy is insignificant in the Hills; on account of non-applicability of any land tenure re-

gulations, the overwhelming majority of the agricultural classes there, over 91 per cent, is in Class I; in Assam Plains Class I is only 76.7 per cent. Due to the same factor, the percentage of cultivating tenants in Assam Plains is nearly four times as high. Livelihood Class IV in the Hills is less than one-half of what we find in the Plains. Class III in Assam Hills, (3.2), is slightly larger than that in the Plains, (2.2).

Examining the district figures in Subsidiary Table 4.1 we find that non-cultivating owners of land and agricultural rent-receivers are largest in Cachar forming 28.2 per cent of the agricultural population, mainly on account of the presence of a large number of petty landlords in the Karimganj subdivision, which is under permanent settlement. The only other non-ryotwari district of Goalpara shows 16.8 per cent, which is lower than 17.4 of Kamrup, which enjoys ryotwari settlement. This apparent anomaly is due to the emergence of a species of tenancy regarding temple and other lands, etc., while in Goalpara many who are legally only tenants are recorded under Class I as owner-cultivators, if they enjoy occupancy rights. Cultivating labourers as a class are hardly more significant than non-cultivating owners of land. This class is largest in Cachar (3.5 per cent), against a bare 0.9 per cent in Lakhimpur. Running down the figures in column 7 against districts we find a striking revelation: nearly one third of the entire agricultural population of Darrang consists of cultivating tenants, followed by Cachar 23 per cent and Sibsagar 22.3. It is only then that Goalpara comes up with its 20.8 per cent. If the reader has grasped that our figures on tenancy and ownership have no relationship with laws and rules but reflect the actual state of affairs as was found at the census, this should not cause him any surprise.

194. **Results of the 1951 Census compared with those of sample surveys of Darrang and Sibsagar :**

Let us compare the results of the distribution of population among different agricultural

classes with the results given by Dr. M. N. Goswami, I.A.S., Director of Statistics and Economic Advisor to the Government of Assam (now officiating Finance Secretary to the Government of Assam), in his "Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Darrang".

"The proportions of owners, tenants and labourers in wholly and mainly agricultural families (2,077) are :—

	Per cent
Owner cultivators	54
Tenants	20
Part owners and part tenants	22
Labourers *	3

The difference in the two results is due to the difference in definitions of the terms given. In the sample survey the definitions are based on law and rules e.g. "There are three Classes of tenants; Occupancy raiyots, Non-occupancy raiyots and under-raiyots.

"(a) In the permanently settled areas an occupancy raiyot means a person continuously holding land under a landlord for 12 years or more, and under-raiyot is a tenant holding land under a raiyot.

"(b) In the temporary settled areas, an occupancy raiyot is a person holding land under a landlord for 30 years in the case of Khiraj land settled for ordinary cultivation, and 12 years in all other cases. Under-raiyots are tenants holding land under raiyots."†

"Non-occupancy Raiyots: All the raiyots under a zamindar or pattadar who do not fulfill the conditions of (a) or (b) above."‡

Again the definition of the word 'owner cultivators' is confined to those owning at least 75 per cent of the farm land and tenants those owning less than 25 per cent of the farm land. If Dr. Goswami's percentages are retained as they are and merely Class III of the Sample Survey is distributed half-half between Classes I and II we will get owner cultivators in Darrang as 65 and tenants 31 against 65 and 32 per cent respectively as given out by the census. The labourers in the Sample Survey form only 3 per cent of the mainly agricultural families. Allowing for the difference in concepts, once the figures are adjusted the similarity is remarkable and should be gratifying both to

the census authorities and to those who were responsible for the conduct of the Sample Survey in Darrang.

#### 194-A. Results of the Sibsagar Survey :

Using the same definitions the survey of rural economic conditions in Sibsagar conducted by Shri S. C. Sarma, the present Director of Statistics, Assam and *ex-officio* Census Superintendent of Assam, Manipur and Tripura gives the following results :—

"The proportion of families of wholly and of predominantly agricultural types taken together varies from 67.24 per cent in the Ex-tea labour villages to 98.73 per cent in the Miri villages. Such families have been classified into four groups: owner-cultivators, tenants, part-owners and part-tenants and agricultural-labourers. The number of families and the proportions of each group in the sample are as follows :—

	No. of families	Percentage
(1) Owner Cultivators (owning 75 per cent or more of the farm land)	1,313	60.40
(2) Tenants (owning less than 25 per cent. of the farm land)	369	16.91
(3) Part-owners and Part-tenants (owning between 25 per cent and 75 per cent of the farm land)	490	22.46
(4) Agricultural labour	5	0.23
Total wholly or predominantly agricultural families	2,182	100.00

The corresponding figures in the Darrang sample were found to be 54 per cent, and 3 per cent, respectively. Thus in both the districts the owner-cultivators or present proprietors constitute by far the largest single group of families, followed next in order of importance by owner-cum-tenant and tenant cultivator groups. The problem of the landless agricultural families is seen to be even less acute in Sibsagar as compared to Darrang where the larger proportion of landless agricultural labour might be due to the presence of a fairly large proportion of East Bengal immigrant families which usually supply the bulk of the agricultural labour in rural areas."\*

\* Dr. M. N. Goswami: A Survey of Rural Economic conditions in Darrang. p. 11.

† Ibid, p. 48.

‡ Sibsagar, Sample Survey, p. 64.

\* A Survey of the Rural Economic Conditions in Sibsagar, p. 17.

Distributing part owners and part tenants in the first two categories we get approximately 71 per cent owner cultivators and 28 per cent tenants, whereas the figures given out by the 1951 Census are, respectively, 75.4 and 22.3. The correspondence between the results of the sample survey and the 1951 census though not so close as we found in the case of Darrang, is equally striking, once we remember the differences in definitions and the adoption of the individual as the basis of the Census data against the family in the case of the sample surveys.

#### 195. Distribution of agricultural holdings by size :

Subsidiary table 4.1 in the case of States where agricultural statistics are available also gives the distribution of 1,000 agricultural holdings by the size of these holdings. Unfortunately the figures for Assam are not available either from the Director of Statistics, the Revenue Department or the Deputy Commissioners. Hence I am unable to discuss different agricultural classes correlated to distribution of land in agricultural holdings of different sizes. The sample surveys of rural economic conditions in Darrang and Sibsagar referred to in the previous paragraph are the only material available which can throw light on the problem. Appendix 6 gives extracts from the results of these surveys which throw considerable light on our problem.

It should be noted that the jhuming or the shifting character of agriculture in the hills provides no problem of land-holdings and rent structure worth consideration. For this purpose our study is to be confined to the Plains Districts. From Appendix 6 we find that in Darrang the average holding per family is 14.3 bighas. As many as 18.5 per cent of the families are without land, while more than a quarter hold between 6 and 15 bighas per family. Judging from the number of cultivable land holdings the number of landless families is 27 per cent of the total.

Not merely the size of the agricultural holdings is small but they are widely fragmented, being scattered throughout the period, separated by land in possession of others, and some times situated beyond the village as well. Darrang survey gives an average of 4.5 fragments per holding while only 19.6 per cent of the holdings

are in compact blocks. 34 per cent of the holdings have 5 fragments or more. Taking the size of the average holding as 14.3 bighas the size of an average fragment is 3.1 bighas or roughly 1 acre. But this does not give the correct picture. More than half the number of fragments studied measure 2 bighas or less and the average number of fragments increases with the increase in the size of the average holding.

In Sibsagar the average size of the holding per family is 15.1 bighas. There 11.3 per cent of the families are without land while another 1.1 per cent hold only less than half a bigha of land. About 66 per cent of the families hold land of size less than the average holding which is found to be 15.1 bighas. The proportion of families holding land of small size group (0 to 10), is 48.9 per cent, of those holding medium size group (11 to 30 bighas), are 40.9 per cent and of those holding large size group (above 30 bighas) is 10.2 per cent. These figures compare favourably with those of the Darrang sample which were 43.6 per cent, 44.1 per cent and 12.3 per cent for small, medium and large size groups, respectively. There are 4.4 fragments per holding, a number almost equal to that of Darrang (4.5). Only 12.6 per cent of the total holdings are in compact blocks, while 37.8 per cent of the holdings have 5 fragments or more. About half the fragments measure below 2 bighas. In the small holdings group, the average number of fragment per holding is 2.95 and thus with an average size of 5.7 bighas in this group of holdings the average size of a fragment is 1.9. Several instances have been observed, however, where holdings of 6 to 10 bighas are fragmented up to 20 or more separate plots, with the result that fragments in such cases are as small as 0.4 bigha or even less.

#### 196. Sub-division and fragmentation of land :

This small size of agricultural holdings, held in non-compact blocks is perhaps the greatest of our agricultural problems. Comparing the size of the average agricultural holdings in U.S.S.R. of 1,600 acres, in Canada of 234 acres and in U.S.A. 159 acres, Agrawal rightly deplores the existence of the tiny holdings in India varying from 3 acres in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to about 12 acres in Bombay and points out how these 'toy size' holdings are uneconomic even



for our wooden plough and a pair of bullocks; "the only feasible and effective alternative is, therefore, to try joint farming on co-operative basis." According to him "organisation of joint farming is indispensable for us." In this we will find the solution for over-coming the evil effects of small and scattered holdings and for enabling the small farmers to obtain the benefits of large scale farming. By doing so the unit of cultivation will increase in which case mechanisation will become easily possible, perhaps even necessary."\*

We have to admit the truth of Lenin's statement that "small farming cannot extricate itself

from poverty". Consolidation of holdings is, no doubt, a step in the right direction, but it will be accepted that it is at best a partial remedy and that also a temporary one, unless it is accompanied by a radical change in the existing law of inheritance which, however, does not seem feasible at the present. Co-operative farming is probably the first step to increase the size of our agricultural holdings, before one can even think of collectivisation. The pattern will be extremely difficult to achieve for the simple reason that the peasantry by its very heritage and present position is extremely individualistic.

## SECTION IV

### CULTIVATORS OF LAND WHOLLY OR MAINLY OWNED AND THEIR DEPENDANTS

#### 197. The role of Livelihood Class I in the economic life of Assam and its Natural Divisions :

Out of a total population of 9,043,707 in Assam, as many as 6,632,992 belong to Agriculture, out of whom as many as 5,235,791 belong to Livelihood Class I 'Owner Cultivators'. It means that in the 73.3 per cent of the entire population of Assam which belongs to Agricultural Classes, Class I alone constitutes 57.9 per cent. We have already seen how among the total Agricultural Classes, Class I alone constitutes 78.9 per cent.

Out of the total population of 7,805,558, in Assam Plains, 5,581,854 belong to Agriculture, 4,278,031 belonging to Class I alone. In Assam Hills, Livelihood Class I totals 957,760 out of a total agricultural population of 1,051,408 (total population 1,238,149). Thus all Agricultural Classes constitute 71.5 and 84.9 per cent in these two Natural Divisions, Class I itself being 54.8 and 77.3, respectively. Among the Agricultural Classes in Assam Plains and Assam Hills, Class I is as large as 76.6 in the former and 91.1 in the latter. We have already seen how in 4 out of 5 Autonomous Districts, (United K. & J. Hills alone excepted), Class I is round about 95 per cent and how in the case of Naga Hills and Lushai Hills, it alone constitutes

nearly 99 per cent of the entire population of these districts. Nothing more needs be said to drive home the over-whelming importance of Owner Cultivators in the economic life of Assam, its Natural Divisions and its Districts. The actual number of persons belonging to Livelihood Class I in the different parts of the State is given in Economic Table B-I, given in Part II-B of the Report.

#### 198. Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class I :

The distribution per 10,000 persons of Livelihood Class I among the sub-classes viz., self supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants is given in Subsidiary Table 4.2 in Part I-B of the Report. The figures for the State and the Natural Divisions are summarised in Table 4.9 below :—

TABLE 4.9  
*Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class I*

State or Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam	24.1	58.7	17.1
Assam Plains	22.6	60.4	17.0
Assam Hills.	31.1	51.3	17.6
Manipur	27.2	49.4	23.4
Tripura	29.6	55.7	14.7

\* Indian Agriculture and Its Problems, by Shri A. N. Agrawal, pages 136-138.

It is clear from the above table that nearly three-fifths (58.7 per cent), of the entire population of this Class in Assam do nothing and are supported by their families. For reasons already explained in detail, non-earning dependants are considerably less in Assam Hills than in the Assam Plains, constituting only 51.3 per cent in the former against 60.4 per cent in the latter. The proportion of earning dependants is more or less uniform in the State and its Natural Divisions forming about 17 per cent of the total, but Self Supporting Persons show considerable variations from 24.1 per cent for Assam and 22.6 per cent for the Plains against as high as 31.1 per cent in the Hills. This is roughly the same type of pattern as generally witnessed in the case of the agricultural population as a whole.

#### 199. Salient features —District-wise :

Darrang has the highest percentage of Self-Supporting Persons, 26.8 in the Plains against a bare 20.7 of Cachar; variation in the Hill Districts is far greater, from 35.9 in the United K. & J. Hills District against 22.1 per cent only in Garo Hills. Conversely, considering non-earning dependants, it is Cachar which returns the highest percentage of 68.7 against 54.2 of Darrang; and in the Hills, the Garo Hills 58.1 against 44.8 of the Naga Hills. Regarding the earning dependants, through Cachar returns an extremely small proportion, 10.6 per cent, it is Lakhimpur (21.9), and not Darrang, (19.0) which returns the highest percentage. In the Hills Division, Naga Hills shows 21.7 against a low 12.7 of Lushai Hills. If we consider dependancy of these *i.e.*, earning dependants and non-earnig dependants combined, Cachar and Darrang still rank first and the last among the Plains Districts with their 79.3 and 73.2. per cent, respectively. In the Hills

Division, Garo Hills will still show the highest dependancy of 77.9 per cent against 64.1 of the United K. & J. Hills District. The entire population of Livelihood Class I in the N. E. F. A. Districts is so small, not exceeding 16,930 in the case of Mishmi Hills, that it is not worthwhile to bother about it.

#### 200. Definition of Earning Dependants :

While considering the above figures, especially regarding earning dependants amongst the agriculturists cultivating land jointly, it is necessary to recall once again the definition of the term as used at the Censuses. An earning dependants for purposes of our census is a person who earns regular (not casual,) income, however small, which may not be sufficient to support him or her. Where two or more members of a family house hold jointly cultivate land and secure an income therefrom, each of them is regarded as earning a part of the income. None of them is, therefore, a non-earning dependant. Each of them is classed as either a self-supporting person or an earning dependant according to the share of the income attributable to him or her by the Head of the family. This does not mean that everyone who works is necessarily a self-supporting person or an earning dependant. Thus for instance a housewife who cooks for the family, brings up the children or manages the household is doing very valuable work indeed, but nevertheless her economic status is that of a non-earning dependant, if she did not also earn an income.

#### 201. Secondary means of Livelihood of Self Supporting Persons of Livelihood Class I :

An analysis of the self supporting persons given in Column (2) of Subsidiary Table 4.2 with reference to their secondary means of livelihood is given in Table 4.10 below :—

TABLE 4.10  
*Secondary Means of Livelihood of Self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class I*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class I, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam .. ..	..	32	15	3	94	69	8	80	301
Assam Plains .. ..	..	37	7	4	88	79	9	84	306
Assam Hills .. ..	..	11	50	1	118	22	1	64	247
Manipur .. ..	..	14	3	9	354	49	2	22	453
Tripura .. ..	..	112	91	39	114	105	28	146	635

The proportion of self-supporting persons with secondary means of livelihood to the total number of self supporting persons is :—

In the State as a whole	3:24
For the Assam Plains Divisions	3:23
For Assam Hills Division	3:31

This gives a uniform picture for the State as a whole and Assam Plains. In Assam Hills, the ratio is much smaller, 3:31 against 3:24 in Assam or 3:23 in Assam Plains. Production other than cultivation, Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources, Commerce and employment as cultivating tenants in their descending order, are the chief secondary means of livelihood of the self-supporting persons in Class I.

The slightly larger proportion under Production other than Cultivation in Assam Hills against Assam Plains is merely due to even greater prevalence of weaving in all tribes of the Hills Districts against Assam Plains wherein it is confined to only the indigenous population and not to the tea garden labour or the Bengalis. Many more self supporting persons in Assam Hills get a secondary means of livelihood by working as agricultural labourers than in Assam Plains. Commerce as a Secondary means of livelihood is naturally of greater importance in Assam Plains than in the Hills. Among the districts, Darrang stands out with 159 self-supporting persons per 10,000 persons of Livelihood

Class I deriving a secondary means of Livelihood by working as cultivating tenants whose number falls to just 1 in Lakhimpur, 11 in Nowgong and 17 in Kamrup. Cachar stands out with as many as 495 self-supporting persons deriving a secondary means of livelihood by non-agriculture (153 by Class V, 184 by Class IV and 147 by Class VIII). In three out of four Non-agricultural Livelihood Classes which provide a secondary means of livelihood, Cachar claims primacy, whereas in the fourth viz., Transport, it is second only to Kamrup.

To sum up, in the self-supporting persons of Class I, who have a secondary means of livelihood, only one-sixth derive a secondary means of livelihood from agriculture, the remaining five-sixths derive it from one or the other non-agricultural activities. Assam Plains faithfully repeats the same tendency. In the Hills, agriculture as a secondary means of livelihood for the self-supporting persons in Class I, is slightly more important, one-fifth following it, against one sixth in Assam Plains.

## 202. Secondary means of livelihood of Earning Dependants :

The analysis of the earning dependants similar to the one we have undertaken for the self-supporting persons with reference to their means of livelihood who make their contribution to the family pool is given below :—

TABLE 4.11  
*Secondary Means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Livelihood Class I*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons, in Class I, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam	1,190	44	76	2	278	37	7	78	1,712
Assam Plains	1,108	51	80	2	321	42	8	88	1,700
Assam Hills	1,550	15	58	..	88	15	1	37	1,764
Manipur	1,098	28	3	2	1,069	85	4	46	2,335
Tripura	788	59	146	31	228	68	19	124	1,463

The over-whelming importance of Livelihood Class I itself as a secondary means of livelihood for the Earning Dependants is clear for Assam as a whole as well as for its Natural Divisions. The total number of earning dependants per 10,000 persons of Livelihood Class I is 1,712 in Assam, 1,700 in the Plains and 1,764 in the Hills. Out of them as many as 1,190 in Assam and 1,109 and 1,550 in the Natural Divisions i.e., 70 per cent in the case of Assam and 65 and 88 per cent in the case of two Natural Divisions return cultivation of owned land as

their secondary means of livelihood. The percentage rises to 80 in Darrang, falls to 46 in Cachar, against 99 in Lushai Hills and 73 in the United K. & J. Hills District. Most of these earning dependants consist of dependants of agricultural families helping in the cultivation of land owned by their own families but not by them. We must remember this slight deviation from a meticulous interpretation of ownership so far as the secondary means of livelihood is concerned in this as well as in all other Classes.

Production other than Cultivation (278), and Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources, (78) are two other means of livelihood which are important as providing secondary means of livelihood to Earning Dependants of Class I; these two Classes play a more important part in the Plains than in the Hills. In the Hills employment as Agricultural Labourers (58) is next in importance only to Class V (88). The district of Lakhimpur which returns the largest number of earning dependants (21,888), has as many as 1,552 under Class I, but only 329 under Class V against 604 in Kamrup. Class VIII as a secondary means of livelihood is more important in Sibsagar (132), and the United K. and J. Hills District (137), than in any other district of Assam.

#### 203. Almost complete dependence on Agriculture :

Subsidiary Table 4.2 brings out an extremely significant fact. It shows that amongst the people belonging to Livelihood Class I only 24 per cent have a secondary source of income, including earning dependants who form 17.1 per cent out of this 24 per cent.

#### 204. Manipur: its owner cultivators :

I have already remarked on the overwhelming importance of this class in Manipur which constitutes 85.3 per cent of the entire agricultural population. Table 4.9 gives the primary economic status of persons belonging to Livelihood Class I in the State. Only 49.4 per cent of its total population does nothing, a percentage lower than that of Assam and both its natural divisions as well as Tripura. Self-supporting persons (27.2 per cent) and earning dependants (23.4 per cent) are both higher than Assam and its natural divisions with the exception of self-supporting persons of Assam Hills (31.1 per cent), which outstrip it.

For secondary means of livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class I in this State, please refer to Table 4.10. As in the case of all agricultural classes combined it leaves no doubt in our minds regarding the primacy of production other than cultivation from the point of view of providing a secondary source of income. All other classes are equally insignificant, only Class 6 being less so. The proportion of self-supporting persons with a secondary means of Livelihood to their total

number is 5 : 27 which is much greater than that for Assam or its natural divisions. The percentage of earning dependants is highest in Manipur (23.4), among all the natural divisions dealt with in this Report. All but a fraction are accounted for by two equally important means of Livelihood, viz., Cultivation of owned land and Production other than cultivation. Commerce is a very distant third.

#### 205. Tripura : its owner cultivators :

Like everywhere else in Eastern India, Class I is of overwhelming importance in Tripura consisting of almost four-fifths of the entire agricultural population. Their primary economic status is discussed in Table 4.9 from which we find that as much as 55.7 per cent of its population are non-earning dependants; a proportion larger than that in Manipur or Assam Hills but lower than that in Assam or Assam Plains. The percentage of earning dependants (14.7), is the lowest of all the 3 States with which this Report is concerned. The proportion of self-supporting persons (29.6), is larger than that for Manipur or Assam or its Plains Division but lower than that for the Assam Hills.

Table 4.10 shows secondary means of livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class I in Tripura. Tripura has the largest percentage of Assam, its natural divisions and Manipur, 6.4 against 4.5 in Manipur and 3.0 in Assam. It has the largest proportion of self-supporting persons with a secondary means of Livelihood to the population of Class I. We do not notice any overwhelming primacy of any particular Class in this respect in this State. Class VIII, Other services and miscellaneous sources, enjoys a small prominence (146 per 10,000 persons) of Livelihood Class I against 114 under Production other than cultivation, 112 under Cultivation of unowned land, and 105 under Commerce. Out of its total 14.6 per cent of earning dependants, 7.8 per cent have Cultivation of owned land, 2.3 per cent have Production other than cultivation, 1.5 have Class III, i.e., Employment as agricultural labourers and 1.2 Other services and miscellaneous sources as a secondary means of livelihood.

## SECTION V

CULTIVATORS OF LAND WHOLLY OR MAINLY UNOWNED AND  
THEIR DEPENDANTS

## 206. The role of Livelihood Class II in the economic life of Assam :

Out of a total population in Assam of 9,043,707, those belonging to agricultural classes number 6,632,992, and those belonging to Livelihood Class II alone are 1,158,254. Thus Livelihood Class II forms 12.8 per cent of the total population. Its break-up by natural divisions is as follows :—

Class II in Assam Plains contains 1,104,618 out of a total population of 7,805,558 and agricultural population of 5,581,584, forming 14.2 per cent of the total population, and nearly one-fifth or 19.8 per cent of the agricultural population. The number in Assam Hills is only 53,636 out of a total population of 1,238,149 and an agricultural population of 1,051,408, constituting 4.3 and 5.1 per cent of the total and the agricultural population, respectively. Livelihood Class, II, in number and proportion, is the second largest not only among all agricultural classes but all classes, *i.e.*, including non-agricultural ones also, for the State and the Assam Plains Division. In the Hills Division, however, it is surpassed by Livelihood Class VIII, Others Services and Miscellaneous Sources; while still ranking third, it easily surpasses Livelihood Class V, *i.e.*, Production other than cultivation.

Darrang stands out conspicuously in returning 22.6 per cent of its total population under this Class, with Goalpara a distant second 17.8 against the average of 14.2 for the natural division. Lakhimpur brings up the rear with bare 5.2 per cent. Balipara Frontier Tract shows an astounding percentage of 49.3 of its total population under this Class. We must note here two facts; firstly the total number involved is very small, 4,791 only and secondly, it is not due to mis-classification on account of an error of judgment by the enumerators. I referred the matter to the Deputy Commissioner who confirms this surmise.

He reports that the cultivators in the plains portion of his district, except in the villages of

Baragaon and Charduar, are all annual patta-holders, having no occupancy rights; as such they all have been correctly shown here.

In the Hill districts, this class is of very small importance, the highest being 8.9 per cent in United K. & J. Hills among autonomous districts and the lowest being zero as shown by Lushai Hills. I have already briefly explained the reasons underlying these figures in Chapter I, Section VI—Livelihood Pattern of General Population and they need not be repeated here.

## 207. Increasing Sub-tenancy in Assam as revealed by Sample Surveys :

## 207A. Darrang Sample Survey :

Dr. M. N. Goswami, in his Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Darrang has the following to say about increasing sub-tenancy in Darrang, which is responsible for the predominance of this Class in Darrang :—

“The areas under each of these types of settlement covered by the Sample are shown below :—

Nisf-khiraj	960 bighas
Periodic khiraj	22,151 bighas
Annual khiraj	12,762 bighas

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Total 35,873 bighas

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“The larger Nisf-khirajdars sublet their land to tenants. Most of these tenants have been in occupation of their holdings for generations and are seldom disturbed in their possession. They are thus like occupancy-right holders from the point of view of their interest in the cultivation of the land.

“Subletting is practised also by the holders of Khiraj land. Taking the Sample as a whole we find that the total area sublet in the whole Sample is 17,971 bighas, which is 22 per cent of the area settled on different terms. How much of this is Nisf-khiraj land is not known. Even if we regard the entire Nisf-khiraj area as being sublet the percentage of area left to the total Khiraj land is considerable (19 per cent).

This may be compared with the district percentage at the last resettlement which was only 6.34 per cent. (Report on the Land Revenue Settlement, Darrang, 1927-1933, Paragraph 25). In other words our survey has shown that subtenancy in this district is on the increase\*\*.

No wonder we have as much as 32 per cent of the total agricultural population of Darrang under Class II. Sibsagar is another district which shows as large as 22.3 per cent of its agricultural population as cultivators of land unowned, a proportion which is less than that of Darrang (32) and Cachar (23), only.

#### 207B. Sibsagar Sample Survey :

A survey of the Rural Economic Conditions in Sibsagar, conducted by Shri S. C. Sarma, Director of Statistics, Assam, and now ex-officio Census Superintendent in Assam, throws considerable light on the problem of subletting and tenancy in the district of Sibsagar.

"In the Lakheraj and large Nisf-khiraj estates owned chiefly by religious-monasteries and priests, practice of subletting lands to tenants is widespread, the common procedure being to charge Government rates of revenue wherefrom the landlord keeps for himself the entire or part of the revenue which he has not to pay to Government. In our sample of 35 villages one Assamese village and one Miri village are found to be comprised entirely of Lakheraj lands (owned by the Satradhikar of Auniati Satra) where, excepting for the total area of village land no other details of land utilisation are available. Also Nisf-khiraj land tenure system is found in two villages, both belonging to the Assamese village-group. Generally, Lakheraj and Nisf-kheraj estates are found to be located in convenient and established villages and contain some high grade "rupit" lands and "bastis" which have been held by tenants for generations. These tenants are very seldom disturbed in their possession and, therefore, may be regarded as occupancy right holders as far as their interest in the cultivation of the land is concerned.

"Subletting is practised also by the holder of the Kheraj land although in many cases only

temporarily. Actual figures on the extent of subletting by Kheraj holders is difficult to obtain as some of the landlords appear to have a conscious motive for suppressing the existence of sub-tenancies in their lands under the apprehension that entries of such figures in the records might lead to trouble over their occupancy rights. An attempt has, however, been made in the enquiry to collect information on the number of tenants and the amount of land rented by them and it is found that in the sample as a whole 8,701.5 bighas of land were sublet out of 43,290.3 bighas under different systems of settlement. This constitutes about 20.1 per cent. How much of this is accounted for by Lakheraj and Nisf-kheraj lands, is not known. But assuming that the entire area under these two categories are sublet, the percentage of sublet area in the Kheraj land comes out as 11.2 per cent. This may be compared with the district percentage of sublet Kheraj land during the last resettlement which was only 2.76 per cent. **Thus subtenancy in the district is gathering strength.** As a rule whenever the holder of the Kheraj land happens to be averse or inexperienced in cultivation or confines his interest in the land only to drawing the utmost rent (in cash or kind), the practice of letting whole or part of his land to tenant cultivators is resorted to. Besides in the good Lakheraj and Nisf-kheraj estates particularly, a process of subinfeudation has developed. If the economic rent of the land tends to leave a margin of profit over the fixed Government land-revenue and other outlays, then intermediaries spring up between the right-holders and the actual cultivators. These intermediaries as also the non-cultivating right holders have constituted a class of parasitic and functionless landlord in our agricultural economy. Of 2,350 families holding land, 192 families belong to the essentially non-cultivating class whose sole interest in the land consists of receiving rents from tenants."† (**Bold type mine R. B. V.**)

#### 208. Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class II :

The primary economic status, i.e., distribution into the sub-classes of self-supporting persons, earning dependants and the non-earning depen-

\* A Survey of Rural Economic conditions in Darrang by Dr. M. M. Goswami.

† A survey of Rural Economic conditions in Sibsagar, by Shri S. C. Sarma, Director of Statistics, Assam.

dants of Livelihood Class II is given in Subsidiary Table 4.3 in Part I-B of the Report. It is summarised in Table 4.12 given below :—

TABLE 4.12.

*Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class II*

State and Natural Division (1)	Percentage of		
	Self-sup- porting persons (2)	Non-earn- ing depen- dants (3)	Earning de- pendants (4)
Assam	24	59	17
Assam Plains	23	59	18
Assam Hills	34	49	17
Manipur	27	41	32
Tripura	33	53	14

In this Livelihood Class for the State as a whole, only 24 per cent are self-supporting and the remaining 76 per cent dependants. 18 per cent are earning dependants, whereas as many as 59 per cent are just doing nothing. The Assam Plains pattern is practically identical with that of the State as a whole but in the case of Assam Hills, the identity with the State and Assam Plains Division stops at earning dependants only which is 17/18 per cent in all the three. The percentage of self-supporting persons and non-supporting persons and non-earning dependants in Assam Hills is 34 and 49 against only 23 and 59 respectively in Assam Plains. The general comments made in the previous section in respect of Class I apply to Class II also.

The proportion of self-supporting persons in Assam Plains is more or less the same in all the seven districts with Goalpara and Sibsagar attaining a small prominence by their highest and lowest figures, viz., 25 and 22. This after all, is not very different from the average for the Plains Division which is 23. In Assam Hills Division, United K. & J. Hills shows as high as 40 per cent self-supporting persons. Abor Hills shows the unbelievable 92 per cent of the total population of this Class as self-supporting persons and remaining 8 per cent as non-earning dependants! With all respect for the sturdy economic independence of the tribals not merely in this district but in all other districts of Assam Hills Division, I am sure this is definitely due to an error in enumeration; but the total number involved is so small, only 95, that it can safely be ignored as it does not affect in the slightest degree the overall percentage either for the State or for its natural divisions. The percentage of non-earning dependants is highest in Cachar 65 against 56 each in Goalpara and Sibsagar. Cachar (11) also returns the smallest proportion of earning dependants against the Natural Division average of 18 and against 23 and 21 in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, respectively. Cachar thus shows less than half the proportion of earning dependants than Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

**209. Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class II:**

An analysis of the self-supporting persons in Class II, with reference to their secondary means of livelihood, if any, is given below :—

TABLE 4.13

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of Self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class II*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class II, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam	59	..	21	1	101	82	9	150	423
Assam Plains	52	..	10	1	94	83	9	146	395
Assam Hills	204	..	230	1	248	54	2	235	974
Manipur	47	..	10	1	471	53	5	134	721
Tripura	228	..	83	23	146	106	28	328	942



The proportion of the total number of self-supporting persons to those with a secondary means of Livelihood is :—

For the State as a whole	24:4
For the Assam Plains Division	23:4
For the Assam Hills Division	34:1
For Manipur	27:7
For Tripura	33:9

There is little difference between Assam and Assam Plains but there cannot be any doubt about the difference between Assam Hills on the one hand and either Assam Plains or Assam as a whole on the other. The proportion of self-supporting persons in the Hills is larger by more than 9 per cent than in Assam or Assam Plains, those among them with a secondary means of livelihood are two and a half times larger in Hills than in either Assam or Assam Plains. The reason is that in the backward hill area with poorly cultivated lands, a secondary means of livelihood has got to be resorted to by the people to make both ends meet.

Other services and miscellaneous sources, Production other than cultivation, Commerce and Cultivation of owned land are the chief secondary means of livelihood in the descending order of importance for the self-supporting persons in this Class. The position regarding Assam Plains is substantially the same. Assam Hills, however, shows considerable and interesting variations from Assam Plains and the State as a whole. In Assam Hills Production other than cultivation is the most important source of secondary means of livelihood followed by other services and miscellaneous sources, employment as agricultural labourers and cultivation of owned land in this order; Commerce comes only after all these means of livelihood. The number per 10,000 persons of Livelihood

Class II securing a secondary means of livelihood from Class VIII is 235 in Assam Hills against 146 in Assam Plains; for Class V, the respective numbers are 248 and 94; for Class I 204 and 52; and Class III 230 and 10.

#### 210. Salient features districtwise :

Cultivation of owned land is a secondary source of income for nearly 3 per cent of Livelihood Class II in the United K. & J. Hills district; in all other districts the percentage is insignificant except 1.3 in Garo Hills. The highest percentage in Assam Plains is shown by Darrang (0.86), which is less than 1 per cent. Livelihood Class III as a secondary means of livelihood is of some significance only in the United K. & J. Hills district where it shows nearly 4 per cent of the total population of Class II benefitting from it. Class IV is utterly insignificant, so also are Class VII and Class VI, except in Cachar (1.8 per cent). Class V and Class VIII again play some part in this regard in the districts of United K. & J. Hills and Cachar. The N. E. F. A. districts with their insignificant numbers can safely be ignored; indeed they should be ignored otherwise their discussion may even create confusion if we take some figures relating to them seriously; e.g. 44 per cent of the total numbers in Class II in Abor Hills show Class VIII as the secondary means of livelihood. The percentage is extremely striking indeed and is outstanding among all the rest but its significance is immediately revealed when we realise that the total population of Class II in Abor Hills (not just the self-supporting persons) is 95.

#### 211. Secondary Means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Livelihood Class II :

An analysis of the earning dependants of Livelihood Class II with reference to their secondary means of livelihood is given below :—

TABLE 4.14

#### *Secondary Means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Livelihood Class II*

State and Natural Division	Number of Earning Dependents in Class II, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	132	1,105	80	1	268	42	5	112	1,745
Assam Plains ..	126	1,122	78	1	266	43	5	109	1,750
Assam Hills ..	262	752	114	4	297	34	6	178	1,647
Manipur ..	254	1,267	5	1	1,485	107	3	64	3,186
Tripura ..	127	336	259	26	246	122	15	253	1,384

Far and away the most important secondary means of livelihood of earning dependants of Class II is Class II itself, *i.e.* cultivation of unowned land. It consists of the dependants of the families of tenants, all working on the land rented by their families. Production other than cultivation, cultivation of owned land and other services and miscellaneous sources are of some importance. The pattern is similar in Assam and its natural divisions. As many as 63 per cent of the total number of earning dependants of Livelihood Class II return the same Class as their secondary means of livelihood. The percentage in Assam Plains (64) is about the same, but in Assam Hills (46) it is considerably smaller. This is because tenancy, as a Class and as a means of livelihood, is of far less importance in Assam Hills on account of land being owned collectively by the tribal village or the community. In this regard Darrang shows the highest percentage (74), the same as in Garo Hills, against a bare 42 in Cachar.

To sum up the overall percentage of persons of Livelihood Class II of Assam, who have a secondary means of income is 21.7 including 17.5 per cent of earning dependants. Again out of 21.7 per cent of the people having a secondary means of income, 14 per cent get it from one of the agricultural sources and only 7.7 per cent of the people derive it from the non-agricultural occupations.

#### 212. Manipur—its cultivators of unowned land and their dependants :

As we have seen this is the second largest class in Manipur, forming 12 per cent of its total agricultural population. Its primary economic status is given in Table 4.12. Only 41 per cent of the total population of this class are non-earning dependants; a proportion far lower than that of Tripura, Assam and its natural divisions. This is coupled with a percentage of earning dependants which forms nearly 1/3rd of this class of Manipur and far higher than a similar proportion anywhere in the 3 States dealt with in this Report. Its percentage of self-supporting persons is also higher than that of Assam and its Plains but not than that of the Assam Hills Division or Tripura.

The proportion of the total number of self-supporting persons to those among them with

a secondary means of livelihood is 27.7 in the case of Manipur, which is higher than Assam and its Plains but not Tripura or the Assam Hills Division. Out of the 7 per cent of the total-population of this class with a secondary means of livelihood, 4.7 return Production other than cultivation, which in the case of Manipur largely means weaving. Other services and miscellaneous sources is a distant second, followed by Commerce and Cultivation of owned land. The secondary means of livelihood of earning dependants, as shown in Table 4.14 is principally Production other than cultivation which alone accounts for 14.9 per cent out of the total 31.9 per cent. Cultivation of unowned land accounts for another very large slice 12.8 per cent. Thus these two classes alone account for as large as 27.5 per cent among the earning dependants (31.9 per cent). Cultivation of owned land, Commerce and Class VIII also play some part in this respect.

#### 213. Tripura—its cultivators of unowned land and their dependants :

In the agricultural economy of Tripura, Class II is as important as its counterpart in Manipur. 53 per cent of its total population consist of non-earning dependants; this is a larger percentage than that of Manipur and Assam Hills. The proportion of earning dependants is the lowest but that of self-supporting persons correspondingly higher (33) than anywhere else except Assam Hills (34).

9.4 per cent of the total population is self-supporting with a secondary means of livelihood which nearly equals that of Assam Hills and is higher than that of all others. Other services and miscellaneous sources account for 3.3 per cent out of a total of 9.4 per cent, followed by Cultivation (1.5) and Commerce (1.1). Employment as agricultural labourers accounts for very nearly 1 per cent. Out of its earning dependants (13.8), 3.4 take recourse to Cultivation of unowned land whereas another 2.6 to Employment as agricultural labourers; together they account for 6 per cent out of a total of 13.8 per cent of earning dependants. Other services and miscellaneous sources (2.5 per cent) and Production other than cultivation (2.5 per cent) are not unimportant.

## SECTION VI

## AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS

## 214. The role of Livelihood Class III, in the economic life of Assam :

We have already considered the importance of Livelihood Class I and Livelihood Class II in the economic life of Assam in Sections IV and V. In this and the succeeding Section we shall have to review the insignificance of Livelihood Class III and Livelihood Class IV in the economic life of Assam. Out of a total population of 9,043,707 of whom as many as 6,632,992 depend on Agriculture, barely 157,343 are agricultural labourers. They constitute barely 1.8 per cent of the total population or 2.4 per cent of the agricultural population. Such utter insignificance of Livelihood Class III in Assam has already been discussed in Chapter I, Section VI, and Chapter IV, Sections II and III. So far there has been land to go round not merely for the indigenous population but also for the land hungry Muslim immigrants from East Bengal. A cultivator would prefer to cultivate his own land with the help of the labour of his family to cultivating someone else's land as a tenant. Nor would he like to be reduced to the position of a mere labourer on somebody's land when he has scope to cultivate his own. Both the indigenous and the immigrant population, therefore, take the help of outside labour or spare surplus labour from the tea gardens in the cultivation of their land. All said and done the smallness of this Class compared to other States of India e.g., Madhya Pradesh which has 27 per cent of the total number of agricultural classes in this class is truly astonishing. Against the all India average of 12.3 per cent of the general population and the peak figures of 21.9 for Bihar and 20.1 for Madhya Pradesh, Assam has only 1.7 per cent of its general population employed as cultivating labourers. Assam so far used to depend mainly on the landless indigent labour from Bengal to act as cultivating labourers who come mainly for harvesting and go back by the middle of January. Hence the census figures do not show any trace of this seasonal influx of agricultural labourers into Assam to help the Assamese and the older immigrants in the fields for harvesting their crops.

The total number of agricultural labourers in Assam Plains is 123,338 against 34,005 in Assam Hills, constituting 2.2 and 3.2 of their total agricultural population respectively. We naturally expect the people in the more backward Assam Hills area with its lack of opportunity for one to support oneself by cultivating un-owned land, (land being owned there by the community as a whole), to show a greater percentage under Class III than Assam Plains (2.2). Class III is utterly insignificant in Lakhimpur, less than 1 per cent, whereas only in the districts of Cachar and Nowgong it constitutes slightly over 3 per cent of the agricultural population. The increasing pressure of population on land and the consequent necessity for people to maintain themselves as agricultural labourers instead of cultivating their own land or someone else's as tenants is growing apace in the United K. and J. Hills district in which over 10 per cent of the agricultural population consists of cultivating labourers. The percentage is nil in Lushai Hills, 1/5th of 1 per cent in the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, one-half in Naga Hills, and 1 per cent in Garo Hills.

## 215. Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class III :

The following Table 4.15 gives an idea of the primary economic status of this class :—

TABLE 4.15

*Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class III*

State or Natural Division	Self supporting persons	Non-Earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam	.. 38	48	14
Assam Plains	.. 35	50	15
Assam Hills	.. 50	40	10
Manipur	.. 72	39	34
Tripura	.. 48	43	9

For the Assam State as a whole, 38 per cent of the total population of this class consists of self-supporting persons against 62 per cent of dependants, 48 per cent non-earning dependants and 14 per cent earning dependants. The

position is more or less the same for Assam Plains, only the percentage for the self supporting persons is slightly lower (35), than that for Assam. There is considerable difference between this pattern and the one revealed by the Assam Hills Natural Division. It has exactly half the total number as self-supporting persons and in the remaining half, 40 are non-earning dependants against 50 in Assam Plains and 10 are earning dependants (against 15 in the plains). The percentage of total dependants of Livelihood Class III is much less than in the case of either all Agricultural Classes or Livelihood Class I or Livelihood Class II. Each of them singly and collectively return total percentage of dependency as 76. It is because of the small overall number of this class that the much smaller number of dependency in this class has been unable to make any appreciable dent on the percentage of total agricultural classes.

The largest percentage of self-supporting persons (38.3) is to be found amongst the agricultural labour class as compared to the owner cultivators (22.6), and the tenant cultivators (23.9). Similarly the percentage of non-earning dependants is also the least among the agricultural labourers, being 47.5 against 58.7 in Class I and 48.6 in Class II. In considering this circumstance the definition of self-supporting persons as discussed in Section I of this Chapter should be borne in mind. An agricultural labourer earning a comparatively small income may deem himself to be a self-supporting person although with the same income a mem-

ber of the class of owner cultivators might be classified only as an earning dependant. As most of the people of Livelihood Class III who can work, earn enough to support themselves, the percentage of earning dependants is found to be the lowest (14.2), in this class, compared to that amongst the owner cultivators (17.1), and the cultivators of unowned land (17.5). The overall percentage of dependency i.e., the total of earning and non-earning dependants is lowest amongst the agricultural labourers (62) compared to that amongst the owner cultivators and tenant cultivators, each having 76 per cent. This is natural because these poor people cannot afford to have a large number of non-earning dependants. Hence it is usual even for their children to work and earn what they can. These are the reasons why the pattern of the primary economic status of Livelihood Class III differs strikingly from that of Class I, Class II or all Agricultural Classes combined. Of course the bare fact that the proportion of dependants is the least among the agricultural labourers is no indication of their standard of living which may be the lowest of all. All that the above data brings out is that agricultural labourers contain the largest proportion of economically active population, which itself is a symbol and a result of their poverty, not of affluence.

#### 216. Secondary means of livelihood of self-supporting persons of Class III :

Table 4.16 given below gives an analysis of the secondary means of self-supporting persons of Class III :—

TABLE 4.16

#### *Secondary means of Livelihood of Self-supporting persons of Class III*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class III, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
Assam ..	138	37	..	8	126	54	6	152	521
Assam Plains ..	53	35	..	9	92	63	7	171	430
Assam Hills ..	448	43	..	3	248	21	..	85	848
Manipur ..	58	14	..	7	775	101	..	167	1,122
Tripura ..	88	40	..	15	135	66	16	231	591

The proportion of the total number of self-supporting persons in this class to those who have a secondary means of Livelihood is :—

For the State as a whole	38:5
For Assam Plains	35:4
For the Assam Hills	50:8
For Manipur	27:11
For Tripura	49:6

Work as an agricultural labourer usually engages a man for the whole day and such a person can hardly find time for supplementary occupations.

Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources is the main secondary means of livelihood of agricultural labourers; cultivation, commerce trailing a long way behind. In Assam Plains the order of importance is different from that of Assam as a whole. Next to Class VIII is Class

V followed by Class IV. It is then alone that Class I comes into the picture. In Assam Hills not merely Commerce but Class VIII as well takes a back number, Cultivation of owned land being far and away the most important secondary means of livelihood, returning more than half the total number of self-supporting persons with a secondary means of livelihood. The next most important secondary occupation is Production other than cultivation returning nearly 30 per cent of the total number of self-supporting with a secondary means of livelihood. All other occupations can safely be ignored.

#### 217. Secondary means of livelihood of earning dependants of Class III :

Table 4.17 given below shows the means of livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class III.

TABLE 4.17  
*Secondary means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Class III*

State and Natural Division	Number of Earning Dependents in Class III, per 10,000 persons of the class, who-derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	177	69	814	11	181	32	3	129	1,416
Assam Plains ..	192	85	851	12	198	39	4	155	1,536
Assam Hills ..	123	11	677	6	120	5	..	36	978
Manipur ..	203	72	1,622	..	1,246	72	..	188	3,403
Tripura ..	84	35	359	8	136	41	6	195	864

Table 4.17 shows that earning dependants in Class III are mostly employed as agricultural labourers. Production other than Cultivation and Cultivation of owned land are classes next in importance, followed by Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources. The order of importance is the same in Assam Plains as well as in Assam Hills except that in the latter, Cultivation of owned land is if anything more important than Production other than cultivation. It is natural to find the bulk of the earning dependants of Livelihood Class III earning by working as agricultural labourers. All members of families of agricultural labourers generally follow the same occupation. In Assam Hills 677 persons out of the 978 earning dependants in this class of livelihood are working as agricultural labourers against 851 persons out of 1,536

earning dependants in Assam Plains. Thus for the State as a whole 58 per cent of the earning dependants of Class III earn a secondary means of livelihood by acting as agricultural labourers; the percentage in the case of Assam Plains is 55 against 69 in Assam Hills. Nowgong and Lakhimpur return as high as 75 and 74 per cent whereas among the autonomous districts Naga Hills takes the palm with 94 per cent.

To sum up we can say that the total percentage of agricultural labourers who have a secondary source of income is 19.4 including the earning dependants who constitute 14.2 per cent. The earning dependants amongst these people are also mostly engaged as agricultural labourers. In fact out of 14.2 per cent of the earning dependants, 8.1 get their income by working as agricultural labourers, that is to say only about

6.1 per cent have a real secondary source of income. It will, therefore, be seen that excluding the earning dependants who get their income by working as agricultural labourers only 11.3 per cent of the people of Livelihood Class III have a secondary source of income. Even amongst this 11.3 per cent, 3 per cent get their secondary source of income from one of the agricultural occupations other than that of agricultural labourer. Thus only 8.3 per cent of the entire agricultural labourer class of the State have a secondary source of income other than from the seasonal agriculture.

### 218. Plight of Agricultural Labourers :

Agricultural labourers work under very adverse circumstances. Apart from hard conditions of work which imply considerable physical strain in inclement weather, their remuneration is hardly enough to enable them to keep fit. The matters of payment in many cases are irregular and unsatisfactory. Again the employment is seasonal and most of them have no employment for the rest of the year. As we have just shown 92 per cent of the total population belonging to agricultural class III have no work for about six months and they have to depend for the whole year on the meagre seasonal earnings of 38.3 per cent amongst them who are self-supporting persons and 14.2 per cent who are earning dependants. This mass of half fed people is likely to fall an easy prey not only to any natural calamity but also to any mischievous propaganda calculated to stir up their feelings by the plea that almost anything else will be better than their present lot. Consequences of such type of propaganda were very obvious in Cachar as personally witnessed by me while I held the charge of that district for 2 years before I took up the census work. Innocent and ignorant Manipuri peasants fall an easy prey to this line of propaganda which had to lead in two cases at least to police firing. Similar was the case in Sibsagar and parts of Kamrup and Goalpara where the situation was exploited by the Communists for their party purposes. The minimum wage legislation is as likely to improve their lot as all such *obiter dicta* of the legislature for other sections of the people. If the ordinary owner cultivators themselves cannot make two ends meet on their present holdings, they could hardly be compelled to treat their labour better. The main solution lies in providing them with subsidiary occupa-

tion other than agriculture, e.g., weaving or other cottage industries. In this connection the following passage in the Report of the Sub-Committee of the National Planning Committee is very pertinent and relevant. The only saving grace in Assam is that their numbers are microscopic compared with the overall numbers in India or in some major Part 'A' States and their problems can easily be sized up and tackled successfully.

"This labour is scantily nourished, clothed or housed. There is no organisation amongst them to fight for and safe-guard their interests, secure decent conditions of work, rates of wages, and a measure of social security which the industrial worker is now steadily attaining. The seasonal character of the occupation militates against any immediate improvement unless and until an all-round national policy concerning landholding and cultivation is adopted and carried into effect."

### 219. Manipur—Its agricultural labourers and their dependants :

Class III in Manipur is entirely insignificant, consisting of less than one-third of 1 per cent of the total agricultural population. In this it resembles the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District of Assam. The total number of people in this Class in Manipur is just 1,381, 39.5 per cent of whom are non-earning dependants against 34 per cent earning dependants and 26.5 self-supporting persons. In view of its very small numbers it will not be safe to make any comparisons of features of this Class in Manipur with their counterparts in other States or Natural Divisions. The primary economic status of the few persons of this class is given in Table 4.15, whereas their secondary means of livelihood are given separately for self-supporting persons and earning dependants in Tables 4.16 and 4.17. The reasons why the number of agricultural labourers in Assam is so small apply with greater force to Manipur, which so far had sufficient land for its indigenous population; this circumstance coupled with their independent nature has reduced the class of agricultural labourers in Manipur to almost a vanishing point.

\* National Planning Committee Series (Report of the Sub-Committee) Land Policy, Agricultural Labour and Insurance by K. T. Shah, page 175.

### 220. Tripura—its agricultural labourers and their dependants :

Unlike Class III in Manipur, Class III in Tripura is a sizable one and contains as much as 6.4 per cent of its total agricultural population, a percentage higher than that of not only Manipur but Assam and its Natural Divisions also. Of all the districts of Assam, only the figure of United K. & J. Hills district with 10.9 per cent surpasses Tripura in this respect; 43 per cent are non-earning dependants, a percentage lower than that of Assam and its Plains and only slightly

higher than that of Assam Hills. Its proportion of earning dependants is lowest among all the Natural Divisions we are considering. With 48 per cent of its total population as self-supporting it easily surpasses Assam and its Plains, not to talk of Manipur, and almost equals Assam Hills (50). Out of its total 8.6 earning dependants, 3.6 are again included under agricultural labour or Class III. Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources (2.0) and Production other than Cultivation (1.4) are next in importance followed by Cultivation of owned land (0.8).

## SECTION VII

### NON-CULTIVATING OWNERS OF CULTIVABLE LAND, AGRICULTURAL RENT RECEIVERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS

#### 221. Place of Agricultural Class IV in the Economic Life of Assam :

In paragraph 214, I have briefly touched on the insignificance of this class in the economy of Assam. In a total population of 9,043,707 and a total agricultural population of 6,632,992, Class IV has a population of only 81,604 (75,597 in Assam Plains and 6,007 in Assam Hills). It constitutes just 1 per cent of the total agricultural population of Assam (1.4 per cent in Assam Plains and 0.6 per cent in Assam Hills), by far the smallest of all the 8 Livelihood Classes in Assam. Land in Assam Hills being owned by the community, tribe or village as a whole, there is very little scope for the phenomenon of landlordism to emerge there. Some who are not landlords are also included here, *e.g.*, a clerk in Government service who may get more income from the rent of his land than his pay in the full-time Government job. Livelihood Class IV is largest in Cachar where it constitutes nearly 3 per cent of the Agricultural population followed by Kamrup (nearly 2 per cent) whereas in Lakhimpur it is just one-tenth per cent. Lushai Hills, the economy of which is even now dominated by the Lushai chiefs, is the solitary district in Assam to return 1.4 per cent of its total agricultural population under this class.

#### 222. Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class IV :

Subsidiary Table 4.5 given in Part I-B of the Report shows distribution per 10,000 persons of Livelihood Class IV in each sub-class, *viz.*, self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants. The figures are summarised below in Table 4.18.

TABLE 4.18

*Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class IV*

State or Division	Percentage of		
	Self-Supporting Persons	Non-earning Dependants	Earning Dependants
Assam	27	62	11
Assam Plains	28	62	10
Assam Hills	25	60	15
Manipur	26	47	27
Tripura	30	64	6

It is clear from the above Table that only 27 per cent of the total population of this class are self-supporting persons and the remaining 73 are dependants (62 non-earning dependants and 11 earning dependants). As is to be expected the largest proportion of non-earning dependants is to be found in this Livelihood Class. Out of every 10,000 persons in this class, there are as many as 6,176 in the State who are non-earning



dependants and only 1,082 earning dependants. Thus the number of non-earning dependants in this Class is larger than in any of the other three agricultural classes or all agricultural classes combined. Similarly, the number of earning dependants in this class is the smallest, viz., 1,082. In the two Natural Divisions, there is no great difference in the percentages of self-supporting persons and non-earning dependants. The percentages of both are less in Assam Hills than in Assam Plains by 3 in the case of self-

supporting persons and by 2 in the case of non-earning dependants. There is, however, a considerable difference regarding the earning dependants who constitute only 10 per cent in Assam Plains against 15 in Assam Hills.

### 223. Secondary Means of Livelihood of Self-supporting persons of Class IV :

The distribution of self-supporting persons with reference to their secondary means of livelihood is given below :—

TABLE 4.19  
*Secondary means of Livelihood of Self-supporting persons of Class IV*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class IV, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	50	9	26	..	286	185	15	381	952
Assam Plains ..	45	10	23	..	301	194	16	404	993
Assam Hills ..	107	8	57	..	93	72	..	93	430
Manipur ..	45	6	1	..	755	268	38	428	1,541
Tripura ..	72	10	29	..	110	154	13	325	713

One finds these self-supporting persons seeking to supplement their family income mainly through means of livelihood falling under Class VIII, V and VI, i.e., 'Other Services and Miscellaneous Services', Production other than Cultivation and Commerce, in this descending order. The proportion is naturally largest under Class VIII which covers the professional and Government services as well as that under the Local Authorities. The proportion of the persons in this class who have any supplementary source of income to the total class is 10:27 in the State as a whole as well as in Assam Plains but only 4:25 in Assam Hills Division. The proportion in the Hills is so low because this class, which is very small in the Hills, has few opportunities to augment its income by taking recourse to non-agricultural means of livelihood. Ignoring Assam Hills, therefore, in the State as a whole or the Plains Division these proportions are far higher in Class IV than in any of the Classes I to III. Land is largely an investment for this Class as its standard of living is generally higher than that of agricultural classes.

Starting with this initial advantage, they have far greater scope for maintaining this standard of living or even increasing it by availing better medical and educational facilities in the towns, which the other villagers normally do not get. This in turn results in higher standard of living by opening up far greater avenues for a career or by resorting to other non-agricultural occupations under Classes V to VIII, which as a rule give much better returns than land in India can ever hope to do. Land in India, as we have already seen, is not a business proposition but a traditional way of life, out of which there is no escape for the large majority of the agricultural population. To the agricultural rent receivers, business is business; so their land too is a business proposition, a mere source of income, to be augmented by non-agricultural occupations.

### 224. Secondary Means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Livelihood Class IV :

An analysis of the earning dependants of Livelihood Class IV with reference to the means of their livelihood is given in Table 4.20 below :—

TABLE 4.20  
*Secondary means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Livelihood Class IV*

State and Natural Division	Number of Earning Dependents in Class IV, per 10,000 persons of the class, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	150	20	46	190	434	66	7	169	1,082
Assam Plains ..	89	21	46	185	453	68	8	177	1,047
Assam Hills ..	924	7	36	250	191	40	..	75	1,523
Manipur ..	177	15	2	309	1,872	226	23	199	2,743
Tripura ..	25	29	35	88	152	67	8	159	563

Production other than cultivation, receiving agricultural rent, other services and miscellaneous sources are the chief sources of livelihood for the earning dependants of Livelihood Class IV. Cultivating their own land comes thereafter. The same is the position in Assam Plains. In Assam Hills, however, out of the total earning dependants (15.2 per cent), as many as 9.2 per cent cultivate their own land for a secondary means of livelihood, rent receiving being a very distant second with 2.5 per cent. Even this percentage of 2.5 (as also 1.9 in Assam or the Plains Division) returned by earning dependants of livelihood class IV definitely contains an element of exaggeration. It is quite likely that many dependants of agricultural rent receivers either on account of the comparatively greater education they may have received or from a sense of prestige, pride or shame may have preferred to pass themselves off as earning dependants though in reality they may be non-earning dependants and nothing more. In the Assam Hills Division towns are very few and far between and the scope of non-agricultural occupations is strictly limited. Hence other services and miscellaneous sources as a secondary source of income in agricultural rent receivers in the Assam Hills takes a back number.

**225. Manipur—Its non-cultivating owners of cultivable land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependants :**

Non-cultivating owners of cultivable land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependants form 2.4 per cent of the total agricultural population of Manipur. Though small they are more than seven times the total number of cultivating labourers and their dependants. This is a larger proportion than that for Assam or its Natural Divisions, and only very slightly smaller than that for Tripura (2.5 per cent). 47 per cent are non-earning dependants against 27 earning dependants and 26 self-supporting persons. Please refer to Table 4.18 given in Para. 222. The proportion of earning dependants is considerably larger than that in Assam Hills, more than two and a half times that in Assam and its Plains and over four times that in Tripura. From its very low percentage of non-earning dependants we can safely surmise that this Class in Manipur is not very flourishing if it has to put such an exceptional proportion of its dependants to work for earning an income.

This surmise is reinforced on a perusal of Table-4.19, which shows that Manipur has the

highest percentage of self-supporting persons with a secondary means of livelihood in this class (15.4) which is more than double that of Tripura, nearly four times that of Assam Hills and more than one and a half times that of Assam or Assam Plains. For the secondary means of livelihood of their self-supporting persons please refer to Table 4.19 in para 223. Production other than Cultivation accounts for very nearly 50 per cent of all self-supporting persons with a secondary means of livelihood. Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources and Commerce account for very nearly the remaining half, the rest being insignificant. Table 4.20 gives a break up of its earning dependants by their secondary means of livelihood, based on Subsidiary Table 4.5. Out of the total earning dependants (17.4). Production other than Cultivation alone accounts for 18.7; Class IV another 3.1 per cent, Commerce 2.3 and Cultivation of owned land 1.8.

**226. Tripura—Its non-cultivating owners of cultivable land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependants :**

In number and percentage this class in Tripura (11,918, i.e., 2.5 per cent) equals its counterpart in Manipur. For their primary economic status please refer to Table 4.18. It has the largest percentage of its population returned as doing nothing, 64 per cent against 47 in Manipur, 60 in Assam Hills and 62 in Assam and its Plains; on the other hand the percentage of earning dependants is also abysmally low (6) which is less than one-fourth that of Manipur (27) and far less than that in Assam or its Natural Divisions. Its only redeeming feature appears to be that the percentage of self-supporting persons (30) is higher than that in any other Natural Division. Class IV in Tripura therefore shows up its nature, as a more affluent and more truly landlord class who can easily afford to withdraw such a large percentage of its dependants from earning anything at all and allowing them to do nothing. For the secondary means of livelihood of its self-supporting persons please refer to Table 4.19. Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources followed by Commerce. Production other than Cultivation and Cultivation of owned land are the chief sources of secondary income. Of the total percentage of earning dependants (5.6), 1.6 return Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources and other 1.5 per cent Production other than Cultivation. Classes IV and VI next attract notice.

## SECTION VIII

## ACTIVE AND SEMI-ACTIVE WORKERS IN CULTIVATION

## 227. Active and Semi-Active Workers in Cultivation in Assam :

Persons connected with agriculture may be either (i) active (ii) semi-active, *i.e.*, partially active or (iii) inactive. Self-supporting persons in Classes I, II and II may properly be treated as active workers and those falling under Class IV as inactive. The semi-active workers will consist of :—

- (i) the earning dependants in all the 8 Livelihood Classes whose personal earning is from means of livelihood falling under Class I, II or III and;
- (ii) self-supporting persons whose principal means of livelihood is other than Cultivation who supplement their income through Class I, II or III.

The total numbers of active and semi-active workers in cultivation are accordingly specified below in Table 4.21, based on Subsidiary Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.21

*Active and Semi-Active Workers in Cultivation*  
(000's omitted)

State and Natural Division	Principal m/l of Self-supporting persons	Secondary m/l of Self-supporting persons whose principal means of livelihood is other than cultivation	Secondary m/l of earning dependants	Total
Assam ..	1,601	86	884	2,571
Assam Plains ..	1,268	81	717	2,066
Assam Hills ..	1,333	5	168	506
Manipur ..	128	1	58	187
Tripura ..	147	2	45	194

Table 4.21 shows that the total number of active and semi-active workers in cultivation in Assam is only about 25.7 lakhs. They include, as we have seen above, the self-supporting persons and the earning dependants of agricultural classes engaged in cultivation as well as self-supporting persons of non-agricultural classes having cultivation as their secondary means of livelihood and also the earning dependants of the non-agricultural classes engaged in cultivation work. In other words, including the whole-time and part-time workers in cultivation there

are 25.71 lakhs of people in Assam who are responsible for the entire agricultural production in the State. The total population of the State is 90.4 lakhs and, therefore, it is the actual full time and part-time labour of 28.4 per cent of the people which produces the agricultural crops in the State. We shall presently consider the problem of assessing the labour of the part-time workers to arrive at a definite conclusion about the percentage of people which can be said to feed the people by producing food crops for their consumption, and for export also, if this be the case.

Out of the total number of 25.7 lakhs of active and semi-active workers in cultivation in Assam, as many as 16 lakhs are self-supporting persons actively engaged in cultivation, whereas 8.8 lakhs are those who take to cultivation as secondary means of livelihood. Only 86,000 persons whose principal means of livelihood is other than cultivation take recourse to cultivation as a secondary means of livelihood. Their break up by the Natural Divisions is as follows :—

In Assam Plains out of a total number of 20.7 lakhs workers in cultivation 12.7 lakhs are self-supporting persons and 7.2 lakhs are earning dependants, against 3.3 lakhs and 1.7 lakhs in Assam Hills out of a total number of workers (5.1 lakhs).

## 228. Percentage of Active and Semi-Active Workers in Cultivation :

The percentage of each of these three categories of workers to the total number of persons actively engaged in cultivation is shown below :—

TABLE 4.22

*Percentage of Active and Semi-Active Workers in Cultivation*

State and Natural Division	Principal m/l of Self-supporting persons	Secondary m/l of Self-supporting persons whose principal m/l is other than cultivation	Secondary m/l of earning dependants
Assam ..	62.3	3.3	34.4
Assam Plains ..	61.4	3.9	34.7
Assam Hills ..	65.8	1.0	33.2
Manipur ..	68.6	0.6	30.8
Tripura ..	75.5	1.4	23.1

It will be seen from Table 4.22 that the vast majority (62 per cent) of the persons actively engaged in cultivation are self-supporting. This is not without significance though no doubt, it is relative to the standard of living of the agricultural population. We would naturally expect this to be the case in a State where industrialisation is yet to begin and the means of livelihood other than agriculture are not available at any place on any large scale. The percentage of earning dependants included in the active workers is 34, while the percentage of self-supporting persons in non-agriculture, who supplement their income through agricultural occupations is negligible, being only 3.3. This again is not surprising. The proportion of persons who have cultivation as their secondary means of livelihood to the total number of persons actively engaged in cultivation is greater in Assam Plains (3.9) than in Assam Hills (1.0). Persons engaged in agricultural occupations and the tea industry being to a large extent part-time and seasonal workers can engage themselves in other occupations to supplement their income. Those engaged in other industries and services, however, will not generally find it possible to combine the same with agricultural occupations. Hence, the absence of tea industry in the Hills is a sufficient explanation of the very low percentage in the Assam Hills.

The earning dependants whose means of livelihood fall under Classes I, II and III are of course mostly persons belonging to agricultural families, *i.e.*, families whose self-supporting persons are in one of these classes. The number of earning dependants is a variable factor, depending upon the resources of the family the number of self-supporting persons and the extent to which agricultural occupations are available in the area. It is, therefore, not feasible to make any more detailed comments than those given in the next para. on the variations in the districtwise figures in last column of Table 4.23.

#### 229. Salient Features Districtwise :

Table 4.23 below analyses the percentage of active and semi-active workers in cultivation in the Plains and Autonomous Districts of Assam.

TABLE 4.23

*Percentage of Active and Semi-Active Workers in Cultivation in Plains and Autonomous Districts of Assam*

District	Principal m/l of livelihood of self-supporting persons	Secondary m/l of self-supporting persons whose principal means of livelihood is other than cultivation	Secondary m/l of livelihood of earning dependants
Cachar	67.4	13.1	19.5
Goalpara	63.3	0.4	36.3
Kamrup	68.9	1.1	30.0
Darrang	58.1	3.8	38.1
Nowgong	66.3	1.0	32.7
Sibsagar	51.6	6.3	42.1
Lakhimpur	53.4	5.7	40.9
United K & J Hills	74.9	3.0	22.1
Naga Hills	60.7	0.1	39.2
Lushai Hills	72.4	0.2	27.4
Garro Hills	53.3	0.2	46.5
United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	69.1	0.2	30.7

In the above Table Kamrup (68.9) stands out prominently with the largest percentage of self-supporting persons whose principal means of livelihood is cultivation, closely followed in the race by Cachar 67.4 and Nowgong 66.3. Sibsaagar (51.6) is last in the list with the lowest percentage among the Plains and Autonomous Districts of Assam. The percentage in the case of the hills districts is 74.9 in United K. & J. Hills, 72.4 in Lushai Hills, and 69.1 in United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. Naga Hills shows 60.7 while the Garo Hills returns 53.3, by far the lowest proportion except that of Sibsaagar. For earning dependants whose means of livelihood is cultivation, Sibsaagar (42.1) and Lakhimpur (40.9) are outstanding with Cachar (19.5) returning the lowest percentage. Against the Assam Hills Division figure of 33.2, Garo Hills (46.5) shows a remarkably large proportion of them.

### 230. Distribution of Active and Semi-active Workers in different Agricultural Livelihood Classes :

From Subsidiary Table 4.6 we find that the bulk of the earning dependants are not agricultural labourers as in the case of Madras and Madhya Pradesh, but are owner cultivators. Out of the total number of 884,000 of earning dependants in Assam, as many as 657,000 earn their secondary means of livelihood by cultivating their own lands, 167,000 by cultivating lands belonging to others and only 60,000 by working as agricultural labourers. Table 4.24 below gives the percentage distribution of active and semi-active workers in the three agricultural livelihood classes. There we learn that only 1.3 lakhs, i.e., 5 per cent out of the total number of active and semi-active workers in cultivation in Assam numbering 25.7 lakhs belong to the category of agricultural labourers. Their break up according to the Natural Divisions is 1 lakh in Assam Plains and 0.3 lakh in Assam Hills. Their percentage in Madhya Pradesh is as high as 57, whereas it is 40 in the case of Madras.

TABLE 4.24

*Percentage of Active and Semi-Active Workers in States and Natural Divisions in the three Agricultural Livelihood Classes*

State & Natural Division	Percentage of active and semi-active workers in cultivation		
	Class I	Class II	Class III
Assam	75.7	19.3	5.0
Assam Plains	72.2	22.9	4.9
Assam Hills	90.0	4.8	5.2
Manipur	86.5	13.1	0.4
Tripura	75.2	12.4	12.4

In the State as a whole the overwhelming majority, 3/4ths of their total number (75.7 per cent to be exact), falls under Class I, nearly 1/4th (19.3 per cent) under Class II and a bare 5 per cent under Class III. In Assam Plains the respective proportions are 72.2 for Class I, 22.9 for Class II and 4.9 for Class III. In Assam Hills Class I is far greater than either in Assam or the Plains and it constitutes exactly nine-tenths of the total number of workers in cultivation. Out of the remaining 1/10th, Class II claims 4.8 per cent leaving 5.2 per cent for agricultural labourers. It is thus crystal clear

that the bulk of the active workers engaged in cultivation are in Classes I and II, whereas the percentage of those in Class III is insignificant. In contrast with this Class I in Madhya Pradesh claims 33.9 per cent and in Madras 48 per cent, whereas the percentage for Class II in these two States is 3.5 and 12, respectively.

### 231. Salient Features Districtwise :

Table 4.25 gives the percentage distribution of active and semi-active workers in cultivation in to different agricultural livelihood classes in the Plains and Autonomous Districts of Assam.

TABLE 4.25

*Percentage of Active and Semi-Active Workers in districts in the three Agricultural Livelihood Classes*

District	Class I	Class II	Class III
Cachar	61.3	32.7	6.0
Goalpara	68.7	24.6	6.7
Kamrup	78.7	17.7	3.6
Darrang	63.5	32.3	4.2
Nowgong	78.3	14.1	7.6
Sibsagar	69.6	27.7	2.7
Lakhimpur	83.0	12.2	4.8
United K. & J. Hills	73.9	11.5	14.6
Naga Hills	97.8	1.4	0.8
Lushai Hills	100.0	-	-
Garohills	94.2	3.9	1.9
United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	97.8	1.9	0.9

In the Plains Districts, Lakhimpur (83.0) has the highest percentage under Class I against Cachar's 61.3. Cachar, however, returns under Class II, nearly one-third of the total number of its agricultural workers, the percentage is 32.7 against 32.3 in Darrang and 12.2 in Lakhimpur which is the lowest. Agricultural labourers are most prominent in Nowgong (7.6 per cent) and least so in Sibsaagar (2.7). Among the autonomous districts Lushai Hills is outstanding by returning nil under Classes II and III and cent per cent under Class I. The percentage in the districts of Naga Hills and the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills is as high as 97.8, with 94.2 in Garo Hills. The United K. & J. Hills District which shows the lowest percentage (73.9) under Class I claims its due under Class II by returning the highest percentage (11.5); it also returns the largest percentage under Class II (14.6). No other district in Assam Hills returns even 2 per cent under Class II.

**232. Total number of effective active workers in Agriculture :**

Assuming that an earning dependant does the work equal to about 1/3rd of that done by a self-supporting person on an average and further assuming that the effort of a self-supporting person for earning his secondary means of livelihood is equivalent to about 1/6th of that required for earning the principal means of livelihood, we can ascertain the ratio of active workers in cultivation to the total population giving a rough idea of the number of persons fed by an active worker in cultivation. On this basis there are about 19.1 lakhs of effective active workers in agriculture in Assam. In other words, therefore, all the food in Assam is produced by the labour of this 19.1 lakhs of people. The State population being 90.44 lakhs, it shows that one active worker produces food and other crops for approximately 4.7 persons of the population. The corresponding figures in the Natural Divisions are :—

Assam Plains Division ... .. 5.1

Assam Hills Division ... .. 3.2

In considering the above figures it has to be noted that they give only a rough idea of the actual workers in cultivation and the number of persons depending for their food on them. Thus for example the agriculturists in the United K. & J. Hills District are not alone supporting the total population of the district. The district gets a considerable amount of imports particularly to feed the population of the capital. Similarly, the figure of 3.2 for the whole Hills Division will require adjustment in the light of the fact that the Hills are normally a deficit area which are fed by imports from Assam Plains Division. Thus we should note that one active worker in cultivation in Assam Plains Division not merely produces food and other commodities for 5.1 persons of that Division, but also a little more for export. A pair of hands devoted to cultivation in the United K.

& J. Hills District produces food and other commodities for 3.5 persons. In the Naga Hills a similar pair of hands produces food for 2.6 persons and in Lushai Hills for 2.8 persons. What these figures actually mean is that whereas cultivators of the United K. & J. Hills District do not feed the entire population of that district the cultivators of Naga Hills and Lushai Hills normally do so as they generally do not get any import of food grains in any sizeable quantities.

The most impressive figure is for Cachar where one effective active person produces food and other crops for as many as 7 persons against only 4.2 in Goalpara, 5.6 in Sibsagar and 6.3 in Lakhimpur. The inefficiency of hill agriculture which is mostly jhuming is clearly revealed by the hill average of only 3.2 as well as the figures for individual districts which are in no single case higher than 3.7 which is the highest shown by Garo Hills. On the other hand, it falls to such a low level as 2.6 for Naga and 2.8 for Lushai Hills, whereas in no Plains district is the average below that of Goalpara (4.2). If we bear in mind that the Khasis do not feed the urban population of Shillong as well as the border areas of the district, we realise that agriculture in the land of the Khasis is as inefficient as elsewhere in the autonomous districts. Against Cachar's high average we must realise the fact that all available land in the district is practically fully occupied, but this is not the case in the other districts of Assam Plains. It should also be noted that only the districts of the Assam valley spare foodgrains for feeding the hill and the border areas.

We must beware of drawing any hasty conclusions from the above figures of effective workers and the mouths they feed. Food is not produced by workers alone, active or semi-active, but other factors such as land, water, etc., are also necessary. In the next Section, we proceed to consider these other factors and correlate the increase in cultivation with the growth of population in the last three decades.

## SECTION IX

# PROGRESS OF CULTIVATION CORRELATED TO GROWTH OF GENERAL POPULATION

## 233. Introductory :

We have now received some idea of the mouths to be fed in different areas and the pairs of hands at work to produce the food, but we cannot draw any specific conclusions from them, because food is not produced only by hands (although they are essential in its production); other things such as land, water, etc., are also necessary for producing food. I shall now proceed to consider the question of actual production of food with reference to the progress of cultivation and the growth of population.

## 234. Average Net Area Sown, 1921-51 :

Subsidiary Table 4.7 (Progress of Cultivation during 3 decades) given in Part I-B of the Report shows how the average net area sown has changed during the last 30 years. The figures for different years shown in the Table are the averages of the figures for the quinquennia ended on 30th June, of the years previous to those specified in the Table. The position in respect of the State and the Natural Divisions is summarised in Table 4.26 given below :—

TABLE 4.26

*Average net area sown in thousand acres  
during the last three decades*

State or Natural Division.	1951	1941	1931	1921
Assam	5,346	4,853	4,019	3,477
Assam Plains	4,910	4,453	3,655	3,120
Assam Hills	436	400	364	357

Table 4.26 clearly shows that the average net area sown in acres in Assam as well as its Natural Divisions is steadily increasing. From 3,477 in 1921 the average net area sown in thousands of acres rose to 4,019 in 1931, 4,853 in 1941 and 5,346 in 1951. In Assam Plains the average net area sown in thousand acres was 3,120 in 1921 from which it registered a steady rise to 3,655 in 1931, 4,453 in 1941 and 4,910 in 1951. In Assam Hills Division, there has been a rise from 357 in 1921 to 364 in 1931, 400 in 1941 and

436 in 1951. Assam Plains which contains 86.3 per cent of the total population of the State includes within itself a slightly more than proportionate share of the net area sown, viz., 91.7 per cent, leaving 8.3 per cent of the net sown area for the Hills Division.

## 235. Increase, Total and Percentage in the area sown during last 30 years :

Table 4.27 gives the total and percentage increase in the net area sown during the last 3 decades.

TABLE 4.27

*Total and percentage increase in the net area  
sown in Assam, 1921-50 (in thousand acres)*

State or Natural Division	1941—1950		1931—40		1921—30	
	Total	Per- centage	Total	Per- centage	Total	Per- centage
Assam	493	10.2	834	20.7	542	15.6
Assam Plains	457	10.3	798	21.8	535	17.1
Assam Hills	36	9.0	36	10.0	7	1.9

From Table 4.27 we find that Assam as a whole registered an increase in the net area sown in 1941-50, by 493 thousand acres, i.e., an increase of 10.2 per cent over 1941; in 1931-40 the increase was 843 i.e., 13.5 per cent; in 1921-30 it was 542 thousand i.e., 15.6 per cent. The Table also shows how the Plains Division has consistently shown a greater percentage rate of growth in the net area sown than in the Hills. It is in the Plains alone that vast areas have been developed, attracting East Bengal Immigrants; on the other hand, there are no such compelling attractions and the scope of increasing the area sown is strictly limited in the Hills. During the 30 years period 1921-50, in Assam the average net area sown shows a total increase of 1,869 thousand acres or 53.8 per cent. In the Natural Divisions, Assam Plains shows a more or less similar increase during the last 30 years, viz., 54 per cent (1,790 thousand acres), i.e., nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times the percentage rate



of increase shown by Assam Hills (22). During the last decade, the largest overall increase in the net area sown is registered by Goalpara, 117 thousand, but Nowgong almost catches up with 116 thousand acres, followed by Darrang (113). Lakhimpur shows an increase of 79 thousand against Kamrup's 87. Sibsagar is the solitary exception which registers a relatively insignificant increase of 6 thousand acres. Goalpara, Nowgong and Darrang show an increase of over 20 per cent with Goalpara topping the list with 25 per cent and Nowgong ranking second 22 per cent, while Sibsagar registers an increase below 1 per cent.

During the last 30 years, Kamrup shows the largest overall increase of 439 thousand acres, followed by Nowgong (314), Darrang (281), Cachar (280), and Lakhimpur (250)—Sibsagar (94), showing the smallest increase. It is instructive to find that the largest increase in the sown area is registered precisely by those two districts of Kamrup and Nowgong to which East Bengal Immigrants have gone in large numbers. The low increase in Sibsagar clearly shows against the background of the huge growth in other districts how most of the available lands in Sibsagar are already occupied and cultivated. It is Nowgong that has registered the highest percentage rate of increase in sown area in this period where it is over 100 per cent against 68 in Kamrup, 72 in Darrang and 70 in Lakhimpur. This vast percentage increase in cultivation has been made possible in Assam by an equally immense stream of migrants coming from the districts of East Bengal, especially Mymensingh.

The Hills Division, as we have seen, shows an increase of 36 thousand acres in 1941-50 against 79 thousand or 22 per cent in the 30 years period. The total cultivation in this Division is considerably less than in any single Plains district of Assam, and the percentage rate of increase of the Division is also less than that of any Plains district of Assam, except Sibsagar (14), during this 30 year period. During the past decade, the increase is mainly confined to Lushai Hills (12.4 thousand), and Garo Hills (11.5 thousand), i.e., 16 and 10 per cent, respectively. Naga Hills shows a very small increase of 3.3 thousand acres or 3 per cent during the last decade; the increase during the entire 30 years period was only 4.8 thousand i.e., an increase of 4 per cent

against the average for the Division which is 22. These figures clearly reveal the full and steady pressure of population in Naga Hills alone, confirming what has been said while analysing its population growth in Chapter I, Section III. The United K. and J. Hills and Garo Hills show an impressive increase of 48 and 31 per cent, respectively.

The statistics of Hills Districts reveal two noticeable features :

(a) Lushai Hills which shows 15.1 per cent increase in the sown area during the last decade shows a **net decrease of 3 per cent** during the 30 years. The highest figure for Lushai Hills was 96.4 thousand acres in 1921 from which it registered a sharp decline to 79.9 in 1931, since then it rose to 81.1 in 1941 and 93.5 thousand in 1951.

(b) The United K. and J. Hills District shows a very great increase of 48.4 per cent in area sown during the period under consideration but it shows a decline of 5 per cent in the last decade.

The matter was referred to the Director of Statistics whose reply was as follows :—

"The crops statistics relating to hill districts are quinquennially estimated on the basis of the previous five years statistics, with previous approval of the Deputy Commissioners concerned. Actual statistics are not annually collected and maintained for these areas in the absence of the Land Record staff there. The reasons for decrease in acreage in the hill districts is mainly due to the fact that under the *Jhum* system of cultivation prevailing in the hills particularly, the land cultivated continuously for 4-5 years is generally left fallow for another 4-5 years in order to attain fertility. To bring under cultivation the similar area thus left fallow depends mainly upon availability of suitable land, weather conditions, etc. No report of any loss in outturn of crops under this system has been received from anywhere, the loss perhaps being compensated by reclamation of fallow land yielding higher outturn."

#### 236. Average net area sown more than once 1921-51 :

Along with the increase in the average area sown in acres, we also find an increase in the area sown more than once, which is another aspect of increase in cultivation. Table 4.28

given below shows the average area sown more than once during the last 30 years.

TABLE 4.28  
*Average area sown more than once (1921-51)*  
*(In thousands of acres)*

	1951	1941	1931	1921
Assam	815	678	427	385
Assam Plains	702	665	416	373
Assam Hills	113	13	11	12

Table 4.28 shows that the average area sown more than once in Assam was 385 thousand in 1921, from which it rose to 427 in 1931, 678 in 1941 and 815 in 1951. In Assam Hills the average area sown more than once remained more or less stationary between 1921 and 1941 at about 12,000 acres, when it suddenly rose to 113 in 1951. Table 4.29 given below gives the increase, total and percentage, for Assam and its natural divisions during the last 30 years.

TABLE 4.29

*Increase, total (in thousands of acres) and percentage, in average area sown more than once in 1921-50*

	1941-50		1931-40		1921-30		1921-50	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Assam ..	137	20	251	58.8	42	10.9	430	112
Assam Plains ..	37	5	249	59.9	43	11.8	329	88
Assam Hills ..	100	788	2	18	1	12	101	818

During 1921-30 the increase in average area sown more than once was 42 thousand acres, reaching its peak in the next decade with 251, and then falling to 137 during 1941-50. The increase in Assam Plains was 249, leaving only 2 thousand for the Hills during 1931-40; in 1941-50, Assam Plains increased by 37 thousand against nearly three times the acreage (100) in the Hills. Hence the highest percentage rate of increase for Assam was 58.8 in 1931-40 against only 11 in 1921-30 and 20 in 1941-50. In Assam Hills, the area sown more than once has registered a small decline of 18 per cent in 1921-40. In the last decade, however, the area sown more than once has multiplied itself nearly 9 times. For the entire 30 years period taken as a whole in Assam, it rose to more than double its 1921 acreage (actually by 112 per cent). The increase was only 88 per cent in Assam Plains against over 800 per cent in Assam Hills. The largest part of the area sown more than once occurs in the district of Kamrup (247 thousand), which alone accounts for more than 1/3rd of such area in the entire Plains Division against a total of 29.9 thousand in Lakhimpur.

The total area sown more than once registers a small decline in terms of thousands of acres, of 15.8 in Goalpara and 3 in Nowgong during the past decade, all other districts showing increases varying from 4 in Sibsagar to 29 in

Kamrup. During 1921-50, Kamrup shows by far the largest increase of 137 followed by Nowgong (53) and Darrang (37). Sibsagar (9) shows a very small increase for the entire 30 years period due to reasons already mentioned. In the Assam Hills Division such area remained more or less stationary for 20 years 1921-40. In the decade 1921-30 it actually declined by 11 per cent. During this decade, 3 out of 4 hills districts, for which the statistics are available, shared in the decline. In the past decade, however, the area sown more than once increased by 100 thousand acres. The districts of United K. and J. Hills and Lushai Hills account for a total increase of 94, out of this 100 thousand. This tremendous increase begins from scratch in both cases. Such increases, to say the least, are suspicious. The matter was referred to the Director of Agriculture, Assam, whose reply has already been given above.

### 237. Average net area irrigated.

Along with growth of population, increase in cultivation has occurred not merely through an increase in the net area sown and an increase in the area sown more than once but also through an increase in the irrigated area. Table 4.30 given below gives the irrigated area in thousands of acres for the last 4 census years.

TABLE 4.30  
*Average net area irrigated during 1921-51*  
*(In thousands of acres)*

	1951	1941	1931	1921
Assam	1,188	494	356	272
Assam Plains	1,057	384	260	234
Assam Hills	131	110	96	38

Table 4.30 shows an extremely satisfactory and encouraging increase in the irrigated area, which, in terms of thousands of acres, was 272 in 1921 from which it rose to 356 in 1931 and 1,188 in 1951. The following table 4.31 gives the growth in the average net area irrigated, total and percentage, during 1921-50.

TABLE 4.31

*Increase, total (in thousands of acres) and percentage, in average net area irrigated during 1921-50*

		1941-50		1931-40		1921-30		1921-50	
		Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Assam	..	694	140	138	39	84	31	916	337
Assam Plains	..	673	175	124	44	26	11	823	351
Assam Hills	..	21	19	14	14	58	153	93	247

Table 4.31 shows that irrigation has increased far more in Assam Plains than in the Hills. During the past decade the Plains registered an increase of 175 per cent against 19 in the Hills. For the entire 30 years period, the Plains increase is 351 per cent, against about 250 per cent in the Hills. The percentage increase obscures the far larger overall figures in Assam Plains against that in Assam Hills; hence they have been given separately in the above table. Most of the progress in irrigated acreage is registered during the last decade which accounts for a total increase of 694 thousand acres in the State against an increase of 916 thousand in the last 30 years. In 1921 only 1/13th of the net area was irrigated; the proportion rose to 1/11th in 1931, 1/10th in 1941, now standing at slightly more than 1/5th. Of the total irrigated area, Lakhimpur accounts for the largest portion with 343 thousand, acres, against 248 in Kamrup and 139 in Nowgong. Out of the huge increase of 694 thousand acres in the whole division, Lakhimpur accounts for an increase of 344, there being a nil against it in 1941. Nowgong was also practically nil in 1941 from which it has risen to 139. In Kamrup, the increase in irrigated area is over 191 thousands acres. Thus these 3 plain districts together account for 672 out of 694 thousand increase in Assam Plains in the past decade. I could not secure any satisfactory explanation of

this sudden and tremendous increase in irrigated areas of the 3 districts from the Director of Agriculture.

#### 238. Average area irrigated more than once :

Irrigation in Assam is generally confined to minor works as and when necessitated owing to weather conditions. No separate figures are available for A(4)—Average area irrigated more than once. As the area under A(4) cannot be greater than A(2), i.e., average area sown more than once or A(3)—Average net area irrigated, the lesser of the two figures under A(2) and A(3) has been assumed to represent A(4) because it is more or less likely that the irrigated area is double crop. This broad assumption must be borne in mind while considering the average area irrigated more than once.

TABLE 4.32  
*Average area irrigated more than once during*  
*1921-51*  
*(In thousands of acres)*

	1951	1941	1931	1921
Assam	649	316	217	155
Assam Plains	604	304	217	143
Assam Hills	45	13	11	12

From the above table we gather that the average area irrigated more than once, in terms of thousands of acres was 155 in 1921, from which, after registering a steady rise, it now stands at

649 thousand in Assam. In Assam Plains, the area rises from 143 thousand in 1921 to 604 thousand in 1951, the Hills showing a modest increase from 12 thousand in 1921 to 45 thou-

sand in 1951. The following table gives the increase in average area irrigated more than once, both total and in terms of the percentage during the last three decades :—

TABLE 4.33

*Increase, total (in thousands of acres) and percentage in average area irrigated more than once, 1921-50.*

		1941-50		1931-50		1921-30		1921-50	
		Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Assam	..	333	105	99	46	62	40	494	319
Assam Plains	..	300	99	97	47	64	45	461	324
Assam Hills	..	32	246	2	18	1	8	33	275

Table 4.33 shows that average area irrigated more than once has increased far more in Assam Plains than in Hills. In Assam, the increase was 62 thousand, *i.e.*, 40 per cent in 1921-40 and 333, *i.e.*, 105 per cent in 1941-50. Thus the total increase for Assam during the last 30 years stands at 494 thousand acres, *i.e.*, 319 per cent. The total increase for the Assam Plains is 461 thousand against 33 in the Hills Division.

### 239. Review of agricultural statistics :

As clearly explained in the notes at the top of Subsidiary Table 4.7, the relevant figures discussed above were supplied by the Director of Agriculture on the basis of quinquennial averages for 1951, 1941, 1931 and 1921, the average being worked out by taking figures for five years ending with the crop year 1949-50, 1939-40, 1929-30 and 1919-20, respectively. It should be noted that owing to the partition of India in 1947, the figures for 1951 and 1941 have been adjusted by deducting 85 per cent of the area of Sylhet for the portion of the district which went to Pakistan. 1921 and 1931 figures have been left unadjusted. No figures are available for the Naga tribal areas of Assam. Separate figures are not available for the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, Mishmi Hills, Abor Hills, Balipara Frontier Tract and Tirap Frontier Tract. The figures relating to the last four districts are grouped together for the purpose of comparison and

those of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and included in its parent districts of Nowgong, Sibsagar, Cachar and United K. and J. Hills. In the case of Mishmi Hills, agricultural statistics are not available for 1921 and 1931 and in the case of Tirap Frontier Tract, these are available only since 1947-48. The population of these three districts in 1951 covers an area less than those included in the previous censuses, as the political officers excluded from the scope of the 1951 census some villages which were enumerated in the 1941 census but which now lie in Part 'B' Tribal areas of Assam.

Over and above such adjustments, we cannot but bargain for a large amount of inaccuracy in the agricultural statistics of Assam. The various factors contributing to inaccuracy are duly and fully discussed in the compilations of agricultural statistics. From a study of the figures as they now stand and as they are summarised in the above tables, we can see that there is a considerable increase under all the four categories of land under cultivation, *viz.*, A(1)—Average net area sown; A(2)—Average area sown more than once; A(3)—Average area irrigated; and A(4)—Average area irrigated more than once. On account of what has been stated before, figures under A(4), *i.e.*, average area irrigated more than once, will contain a greater amount of inaccuracy than these under the first three categories.

# 240. Components of cultivated area per capita 1921-51 :

Table 4.34 given below gives the components of cultivated area per capita during the last

three decades. The method of arriving at per capita components is fully described in the fly-leaf to Subsidiary Table 4.8 to which the reader is referred to for necessary guidance.

TABLE 4.34

*Components of cultivated area per capita, 1921-51*

State and Natural Division	Un-irrigated single crop cultivation per capita (USC) (in cents)				Un-irrigated double crop cultivation per capita (UDC) (in cents)				Irrigated single crop cultivation per capita (ISC) (in cents)				Irrigated double crop cultivation per capita (IDC) (in cent)				
	1951	1941	1931	1921	1951	1941	1931	1921	1951	1941	1931	1921	1951	1941	1931	1921	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Assam	..	44.2	52.7	56.8	58.7	1.8	4.7	3.4	4.5	6.0	2.3	2.3	2.3	7.2	4.2	3.6	3.1
Assam Plains Division	47.2	56.0	60.9	61.2	1.2	5.5	4.0	5.3	5.7	1.2	1.0	2.1	7.6	4.6	3.9	3.3	
Assam Hills Division	21.8	30.0	31.6	43.9	6.3	..	..	..	7.9	10.0	10.1	3.5	4.1	1.3	1.3	1.7	

A glance at Subsidiary Table 4.8 summarised in Table 4.34 above shows how unsatisfactory is the actual position regarding the increase in cultivation with reference to the increase in the total population. The unirrigated single crop cultivation per capita in Assam has actually decreased from 59 cents in 1921 to 44 cents in 1951, a drop of 15 cents per capita. This shows that in Assam cultivable land per capita has been reduced by nearly one-fourth, i.e., every individual living in Assam today has only three-fourths of the land he would have enjoyed only 30 years ago. Assam Plains Division shows a similar fall from 61 cents per capita in 1921 to 47 in 1951. The fall is even more drastic in the sister hills division where unirrigated single crop cultivation per capita has fallen from 44 to 22, a drop of exactly one half.

The position regarding unirrigated double crop cultivation is even more unsatisfactory; from 4.5 cents per capita in Assam in 1921 it has now fallen to only 1.8; the fall in the case of the Plains Division is even steeper from 5.3 in 1921 to 1.2 in 1951. Thanks to Lushai Hills and United K. J. Hills districts, Assam Hills division in 1951 enjoys as much as 6.3 cents per capita of unirrigated double crop cultivation.

The above picture of unrelieved gloom is brightened when we go on to consider the irrigated area whether single or double cropped. Area under the former category in Assam remained absolutely steady at the figure of 2.3 cents per capita during 1921-41; in the past decade, however, it has registered a tremendous jump to 6 cents per capita, in spite of a great increase in population. The position in Assam Plains division is equally satisfactory. Here irrigated single crop cultivation had actually fallen from 2.1 cents per capita in 1921 to 1.0 cent in 1931; after a slight increase to 1.2 cents in 1941 we now have 5.7 cents per capita in 1951. Here again Assam Hills Division is in a slightly better position with 7.9 cents per capita; this, however, is a fall from the even more satisfactory position which it enjoyed both in 1931 and 1941 when it had as much as 10 cents per capita of irrigated single crop cultivation.

Bearing in mind the assumptions we have made in arriving at the figures over double crop cultivation, we find that the position in Assam greatly improved in the past decade as well as in the last 30 years. Against 3.1 cents per capita in 1921 and 4.2 cents in 1941 we now have 7.2. The position in Assam Plains Division is more or less the same, from 3.3 cents per capita in 1921 to 7.6 cents per capita in

1951. Assam Hills Division is here at a advantage in having only 4.1 cents per capita of the irrigated double cropped cultivation. There is, however, a silver lining to the cloud when we find that the present figure is itself a great increase over the 1931 and 1941 figures of 1.3 cents per capita.

**241. Components of cultivated area per capita-salient features districtwise :**

The unirrigated single crop cultivation per capita in 1951 is highest in Darrang (59 cents per capita) closely followed by Sibsagar (57) and trailed by Lakhimpur (24). In 1921, however, Sibsagar was well ahead of all districts with 76 cents per capita with Nowgong (68) as a distant second and Darrang (65) as the third. Goalpara (45) had in those days the lowest figure, a position which it has uptill now consistently maintained. The position regarding unirrigated single crop cultivation per capita reveals an alarming deterioration in Lakhimpur from 58 cents per capita in 1921 to 24 cents per capita in 1951. It is, however, in the Hills districts that the position is apparently very alarming. The 1951 figures reveal an erratic pattern from 37 cents per capita for Naga Hills to 35 for Lushai Hills, 25 for Garo Hills and only 1.9 cents per capita for the United K. & J. Hills. The last named district had already an extremely low per capita figure of 13.3 in 1921; it registered some increase and reached 17.1 in 1941; for the present decade, however, the figure has fallen precipitously to less than 2 cents per capita. In Naga Hills we find the drop from 70 cents in 1921 to 37 in 1951. A far steeper drop is given out by Lushai Hills 98 cents per capita in 1921 to less than 35 in 1951, *i.e.*, a fall of over 62 per cent in 30 years.

The position regarding unirrigated double crop cultivation per capita reveals a very erratic pattern in the last three decades, *e.g.*, Nowgong had as many as 14 cents per capita here in 1931 and 13 in 1941, but in 1951 the column is blank; so also for Kamrup which had 3.5 cents per capita here in 1931 shooting upto 12.9 in 1941, but returning blank at 1951. The position is satisfactory only regarding Cachar which returns 5.2 cents per capita under this head and for Sibsagar (3). For the two hills districts of Lushai Hills (11.9 cents per capita) and United K. & J. Hills (11.6) the position is very satisfactory. Both districts return the present high figures against blank in all the previous censuses.

Under irrigated single cropped cultivation per capita the position of Lakhimpur is very satisfactory with 29.2 cents per capita in 1941 from a nil return in 1921, 1931 and 1941. Darrang (7), Nowgong (5) and Goalpara (2.4) are the only three other districts which show not an unsatisfactory position. In the Hills districts of Garo Hills (20 cents per capita) and Naga Hills (18) are the only two districts to show a positive return. The blank return against Cachar and Sibsagar need not alarm us as they may merely show the lack of need for irrigation water in view of the abundant rainfall well distributed throughout the year which these two districts enjoy. Subsidiary Table 4.8 does not fail to bring out the prevalence of irrigated and terrace cultivation in Naga Hills; though it is sad to note that irrigated area in that district is unable to keep pace with increase in population as a result of which irrigated single crop cultivation per capita has declined from 26.3 cents in 1931 to 18.1 in 1951. Here Garo Hills is in a far more fortunate position because from 3.8 cents per capita under this head in 1921, its figure shows a steady increase to 8.5 in 1931, 11.4 in 1941 and 20.1 in 1951, inspite of a considerable increase in population in the last 30 years.

Irrigated double crop cultivation per capita is satisfactory only in the two districts of Kamrup and Goalpara which show respectively, 16.6 and 12.9 cents per capita. It is noteworthy that most of the satisfactory position shown by Kamrup is achieved only in the past decade whereas for Goalpara there is a slight falling off from 1941, when it had as many as 15.7 cents here. In the Hills districts, the United K. & J. Hills with 6.1 cents per capita and Garo Hills are in a happier position than either Naga Hills or Lushai Hills.

**242. Land area per capita and trend of cultivation per capita during three decades :**

Columns 4 to 7 of the Subsidiary Table 4.9 give the total cropped area, *i.e.*, the aggregate of the relevant columns in Subsidiary Table 4.8. They are summarised below :—

TABLE 4.35

*Area of Cultivation per capita in cents*

State or Natural Division	Cultivation per capita in cents			
	1951	1941	1931	1921
Assam	59.2	63.9	66.1	68.6
Assam Plains	61.7	67.3	69.8	71.9
Assam Hills	40.1	41.3	43.0	49.1

It is clear from Table 4.35 that the total cropped area per capita has steadily decreased from 65.4 cents in 1921 to 57.9 cents in 1951—a decrease of 13.7 per cent against the increase of 42.5 per cent in the population. Both the Divisions show a steady decrease from 71.9 in 1921 to 61.7 in 1951 in Assam Plains and from 49.1 in 1921 to 40.1 in 1951 in Assam Hills. The percentage decrease in cultivation and the percentage increase of population from 1921 to 1951 in Assam and its Divisions are given below :—

TABLE 4.36

*Percentage increase in population and cultivation in Assam (1921-51)*

State and Natural Division.	Percentage decrease in the area of cultivation per capita.	Percentage increase in population during 1921-1951
Assam	—13.7	+42.5
Assam Plains	—14.2	+42.8
Assam Hills	—18.3	+40.8

It is clear that the pressure of population on the cultivated area has undoubtedly been increasing steadily. However, its rate is not so disquieting as in Madras which Shri Venkateswaran I.C.S., Superintendent Census Operations Madras, clearly brings out in the following disconcerting Table 4.37 which may be noted by the persons who are unduly alarmed by the increase in the population of Assam.

TABLE 4.37

*Percentage increase in population and cultivation in Madras (1921-51)*

State and Natural Division	Percentage decrease in the area of cultivation per capita	Percentage increase in the population during 1921-1951
Madras	—30.8	+40.5
Deccan Division	—25.9	+37.4
West Madras Divn.	—25.0	+52.5
North Madras "	—32.9	+41.7
South Madras "	—35.4	+38.0

#### 243. Cultivated and cultivable area :

Cols. 2 and 3 of Subsidiary Table 4.9 summarised in Table 4.38 given below show land area per capita in cents as well as area cultivated and cultivable per capita :—

TABLE 4.38

*Per capita area, total and cultivable in 1951*

State/Natural Division	LAND AREA PER CAPITA IN 1951	
	Total land area per capita in cents	Area cultivated and cultivable per capita in cents
Assam	365.4	268.4
Assam Plains	228.9	158.3
Assam Hills	1,362.2	1,072.5

Table 4.38 shows that out of the total land area in Assam 365.4 cents per capita, as much as 268.4 cents per capita are available for cultivation, the rest being covered with forests, swamps, hills, roads, rivers, etc. Its break-up for the two natural divisions reveals an extremely interesting state of affairs. The cultivable area in Assam Plains division is as low as 158.3 cents per capita against 1,072.5 cents per capita in the sister Hills division. Considering its break-down for districts, we find that Garo Hills is shown to have as many as 2,000 cents per capita as its cultivable area against only 314 in the United K. & J. Hills district. The figures reveal an almost unbelievable scope for expansion of cultivated area in every single district of Assam whether Hills or Plains. One can only wish if these were true. It is enough to make any student of the population problem of India believe that here is an Open Sesame which can satisfactorily solve all his problems and difficulties. Unfortunately life is not so obliging and refuses to countenance the rosy visions conjured up by these agricultural statistics great caution must be exercised in using these figures. The scope for expansion of cultivation is strictly limited not merely in the Assam Valley but also in the Hills. All lands readily cultivable and available have already been brought under plough. Large parts of the area apparently described as cultivable can actually be brought under plough only at a very great, if not prohibitive, cost. If cost is no consideration it will be possible to expand cultivation anywhere in the world not excluding



even the summits of the Himalayas; but the crux of the matter is whether it is worthwhile, *i.e.*, economic to do so. Hence, before these figures are used in their totality, it is very necessary to bear in mind the **actual localities** herein put down as cultivable and the probable cost of bringing such areas under cultivation in relation to their likely yields.

#### 244. Per capita cultivated area—Districtwise :

In the Assam Plains division, the districts of Darrang and Kamrup are outstanding with their cultivated area amounting to about 73 cents per capita in 1951, followed by 65 cents per capita in the case of Nowgong. The two districts to show the lowest per capita cultivation are Cachar (51.9) and Goalpara (52.4). In 1921, however, it was Goalpara which was on the lowest rung of the ladder with 59.0 cents per capita against 60.2 in Cachar, which was not far behind Lakhimpur (60.5). In 1921, however, it was Kamrup with its 84.3 cents per capita that was on the top-most rung of the ladder. For the State as a whole, the total cultivated area per capita has decreased by 9.4 cents in Assam; the break-down for natural division is 10.2 cents for the Plains and 9.0 cents for the Hills. This decline is practically universal over the entire field and is shared by every district during the last three decades. There is not a single bright spot on the economic and demographic firmament of Assam in which the growth of cultivated area has not merely kept pace with the growth of population but outstripped it to such an extent as to give us an increase in the per capita area. For the State as a whole, the decline in 1921-30 was of the order of 2.5 cents per capita. 1931-40 showed a slightly smaller decline, of the order of 2.2 cents per capita. At the present census, however, the decline in per capita cultivated area is more than double what the two previous decades showed. Thus the decline itself has a tendency to increase. Lakhimpur shows the smallest decline among the Plains districts, *viz.*, 4.5 cents per capita closely followed by Darrang (4.8) in the last 30 years followed by Goalpara (6.6 cents per capita). The largest decline is in the case of Sibsagar, of the order of 19.8 cents per capita in the short period of 30 years. Among the Hills division, the decline is the lowest in the case of the United

K. & J. Hills, being of the order of 1.3 cents per capita and largest in the case of Lushai Hills.

Taking the past decade alone, the decline is largest in the case of Cachar. From a cultivated area of 70.9 cents per capita in 1941 it now stands at 51.9 cents in 1951 in this district—a tremendous fall of 19 cents per capita in the last 10 years. The reasons are mainly two: the scope for growth of cultivated area in this district is strictly limited; whereas on the other hand, its population has increased at an unprecedented rate in Cachar, history mainly on account of the arrival of large numbers of displaced persons. Garo Hills is the solitary exception among all districts showing a very small increase in per capita cultivation over 1941. The position of Naga Hills confirms the alarm expressed by successive Deputy Commissioners, because its total cultivated area, which was as high as 70 cents per capita in 1921 has now fallen to 56.3 in 1951, a decline of 13.7 cents which is larger than that of any other district of Assam except Sibsagar in the Plains Division and Lushai Hills in the Hills Division.

It is, however, the position in Lushai Hills that appears most alarming and disconcerting. Its per capita cultivation was 98 in 1921 from which it has come down to less than half, *viz.*, 47.6 in 1951, an unbelievably large decline of 50.3 cents in 30 years. While considering the growth of population in Lushai Hills we have already seen how this district has steadily gone on increasing its population at one of the highest rates of any district in Assam; on the other hand not merely its *jhum* lands have failed to increase with the passage of time but some are reported to have gone out of cultivation which is responsible for a net fall in the per capita cultivation of more than 50.3 cent in 30 years. If a closer study and analysis of the causes of recent unrest in Lushai Hills were examined in detail, they may perhaps be found to be related to this tremendously increasing pressure of population on land and the consequent impoverishment and discontent among this spirited race of hillmen. If this situation persists the newly set up District Council will find it difficult to manage the situation without a considerable amount of patience and ingenuity, staff and finance to ameliorate and better the condition of the Lushais.

Table 4.39 below summarises the discussion, giving as it does the total cropped area per capita in cents in the plains and Autonomous districts of Assam.

TABLE 4.39

*Total cropped area per capita in cents for some districts of Assam, 1951*

District	Area per capita in cents.
Cachar	51.9
Goalpara	52.4
Kamrup	72.6
Darrang	73.1
Nowgong	65.4
Sibsagar	60.1
Lakhimpur	56.1
United Khasi & Jaintia Hills	19.6
Naga Hills	56.3
Lushai Hills	47.7
Garo Hills	50.9
United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	not available

**245. Grain production capacity per capita (1921-51) :**

In the preceding paragraph we have examined how cultivation per capita in cents in Assam has been steadily falling in the last 30 years. This by itself need not be any cause for alarm if from a smaller per capita cultivation our farmers are able to raise a proportionately larger yield, say by the use of improved agricultural techniques, manures, and implements. For this purpose, I attempted to ascertain from the Director of Agriculture the yield rate factors for the principal crops grown in the State. As I drew blank here it is not possible for me to give the grain production capacity per capita even for 1951, not to talk of the past decades. In any discussion of correlation between population and cultivation the fact of a rise or fall in the grain production capacity per capita must not be overlooked. A fall in the grain production capacity per capita between 1921 and 1951, as we find in the case of Madhya Pradesh, is likely to have been due to one or the other of the following three possible changes during this period; (1) the proportion of area under cultivation devoted to food grains may have decreased;

(2) imports into the State/Division from outside may have increased; or exports from the State/Division to outside may have decreased; or (3) the average annual rate of consumption per capita may have decreased (this may be caused by an increase in the relative proportion of those classes of the population whose annual rate of consumption per capita is below normal).

TABLE 4.40

*Grain production capacity of cultivation per capita in Madhya Pradesh and its Natural Division for the quinquennia ending 1921 and 1951*

State or Natural Division	Grain production capacity in lbs. per capita.		Net fall in lbs.
	1951	1921	
1.	2	3	4
Madhya Pradesh	824	649	175
North-West Madhya Pradesh Division	622	514	148
East Madhya Pradesh Division	789	676	113
South-West Madhya Pradesh Division	1,073	788	285

**246. Three questions set by the Registrar General, India :**

I now proceed to answer the following three questions in relation to Assam set by the Registrar General, India for every Census Superintendent. The questions are on a uniform basis, so that the replies could be made use of on an all India basis :—

**QUESTIONS :**

- (1) With reference to available statistics of movement of foodgrains under the basic plan during the last five years, is the State/Division
  - (i) a net exporter of foodgrains;
 

or
  - (ii) a net importer of foodgrains : and
 

or
  - (iii) self-sufficient in foodgrains?

**ANSWER :** Assam as well as both its Natural Divisions; viz., Assam Plains and Assam Hills are net importers of foodgrains.

In this connection Table 4.41 giving the statistics of exports from and into Assam kindly made available by Shri A. N. Kidwai, I.C.S., Secretary to the Government of Assam in the Supply Department will reveal an interesting story.

TABLE 4.41

*Export and import of foodgrains for Assam  
(1942-51)—(Figures in tons)*

Kharif year	Export (in terms of rice)	IMPORT (Calendar Year)		
		Rice	Wheat	Total
1942-43	.. 75,000	..	..	..
1943-44	.. 78,670	..	7,261	7,261
1944-45	.. 81,000	..	12,265	12,265
1945-46	.. 98,000	..	13,766	13,766
1946-47	.. 39,098	..	14,354	14,354
1947-48	.. 3,715	5,000	12,433	17,433
1948-49	.. Nil.	Nil.	15,836	15,836
1949-50	.. 10,300	4,500	15,085	19,585
1950-51	.. Nil.	42,000	75,400	117,400
1951-52 (upto May)	.. Nil.	20,053	60,000	80,053

The above table clearly shows that even during the world war II, when the population of Assam was greatly augmented by the presence of large military forces and the available labour force from agriculture was withdrawn to war projects, Assam was a surplus State and a net exporter of rice, as it was before the war. All through the war Assam steadily exported over 75 thousand tons of rice, which increased to 98 thousand tons in 1945-46. Even if we take into consideration the small quantity of wheat imported by it, there was a net export of foodgrains from Assam to the tune of 70 thousand tons in 1943-44 and 1944-45. The export registered an increase in the year 1945-46 and stood at 84 thousand tons. It was only after the war was over and a series of unprecedented natural calamities occurred in Assam, e.g., annual floods over vast areas and the great Assam earthquake of August, 1950, with its widespread effect on the topography and food production capacity of the State, that the food production in the State has greatly declined while population went on steadily increasing with the arrival of a large number of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan, not to talk of the increased influx of Muslim immigrants.

These made our surplus State deficit overnight, as a result of which we find that the net excess of imports over exports which shot up to 117 thousand tons in 1950-51 and over 80 thousand tons in 1951-52 (up to May alone). Of course one of the reasons for Assam becoming a deficit State in food production is the partition of the district of Sylhet, as a result of which vast and rich rice producing areas in Habibganj and Sunamganj sub-divisions went to Pakistan. Due to the cumulative effect of the factors described above, coupled with hoarding and profiteering indulged in by a section of the trade as well as large cultivators, Assam had to depend more and more on the Centre for imported food to feed at least its tea garden labourers, the railway staff and the border areas. In United K. & J. Hills especially and in parts of the Garo Hills, the population living on their borders have lost their markets and in some respects control over foodgrains produced in their own fields across their borders. This had the effect of intensifying food shortage in Assam.

**QUESTION 2. Part I:** Has the area of cultivation per capita in this State/Division

(a) increased by more than 5 per cent;

or

(b) declined by more than 5 per cent;

or

(c) remained steady within 5 per cent between 1921-51?

**Part II.** If the answer to Part I is (a) or (b), specify in cents the extent of increase or decrease.

**ANSWER.** The area of cultivation in Assam and Assam Plains and Assam Hills has declined by more than 5 per cent. The extent of decline in terms of percentage is :

For Assam	11.5 per cent.
For Assam Plains	11.2 per cent.
For Assam Hills	18.8 per cent.

**Part II.** The actual extent of decrease is :

Assam	7.53 cents.
Assam Plains	7.63 cents.
and Assam Hills	9.24 cents

The Registrar General wanted every Census Superintendent to answer the following extra questions :

**Question 2. Part III.** What is the corresponding increase or decrease in grain production capacity per capita between 1921-51? (For answering this question you will have to ascertain from the Director of Agriculture the yield factor, and multiply the number of cents stated in answer to Part II by this factor.)

**QUESTION No. 3.** If the answer to Part III of Question 2 shows that there has been a decrease of grain production capacity per capita between 1921-51, this is likely to be accompanied by one or other of three possible changes during this period—

- (i) The proportion of area under cultivation devoted to foodgrains may have decreased.
- (ii) Imports to the State Division from outside may have increased; or exports

from the State/Division to outside may have decreased.

- (iii) The average annual rate of consumption per capita may have decreased (this may be caused by an increase in the relative portion of those classes of the population whose annual rate of consumption per capita is below normal)

Discuss the extent to which, in your opinion each of these possible changes may have occurred between 1921 and 1951, and state your findings.

**ANSWER.** As the Director of Agriculture, Assam, was not in a position to give the yield rate factor, it was not possible for me to answer Part III of Question 2 and also Question 3.

## SECTION X

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 247. Abnormal dependence on agriculture :

In the Chapter we have seen that 73.3 per cent of the population of Assam belongs to the agricultural classes, of whom 58.5 per cent are economically completely inactive, about 25 per cent are actually self-supporting persons and about 17 per cent are earning dependants. Taking into consideration the secondary agricultural occupations of people belonging to agricultural and non-agricultural classes, we find that it is the effort equivalent to that of about 19.1 lakhs of active workers in agriculture in Assam, which produces all the agricultural commodities for the entire population of about 90.44 lakhs. But one active worker is not in a position to produce food and other crops for approximately 4.7 persons on the purely mathematical reckoning because his efforts are to be supplemented by a net balance of imports of foodgrains over exports for a major portion of the last decade, particularly after the end of the second world war.

While 73.3 per cent of the entire population of Assam belongs to agricultural classes, over

94 per cent of the people living in the rural areas depend on agriculture including tea for their sustenance. This vast majority of people have to depend on the vagaries of the monsoon and to limit their productive activities to only a certain portion of the year, and having no work for the rest of the year. Under-employment amongst these people is, therefore, obvious and is clearly underlined by the census figures which we have already discussed in detail in the preceding Sections.

In paragraph 190, we have noticed how only 49 per cent of the working population amongst the agricultural classes have a secondary means of livelihood. In other words, only about half the working population of agricultural classes have a supplementary source of income, the other half being entirely at the mercy of agriculture alone. This 49 per cent of the people include nearly 33 per cent of those who have as a secondary means of livelihood one of the agricultural activities and only 16 per cent of the working population of the agricultural classes have a secondary occupation other than agriculture. As a percentage of the total population

of the agricultural classes, we have seen that only 20.4 per cent of the people have a secondary source of income of whom 17 per cent are earning dependants and the rest, *i.e.*, 3.4 per cent are self-supporting persons. Out of this total of 20.4 per cent, only about 7 per cent have a secondary source of income other than agriculture and of this 7 per cent again, 3.7 per cent get subsidiary employment in some kind of industry of Livelihood Class V which also includes such industries allied to agriculture as stock-raising, forestry, breeding of small animals, tea plantation, etc. In other words, the census figures show that the vast majority of the people belonging to the agricultural classes have little or no employment other than agriculture and that a very small fraction of them are able to supplement their income from other sources. The necessity of introducing cottage industries and other non-agricultural occupations as a secondary means of livelihood amongst the agricultural classes can, therefore, hardly be over-emphasised.

In this connection we should note the progress made in providing supplementary occupations to the cultivators in the vicinity of their homes in Japan which is an essentially agricultural country like India. Chamanlal says, "Home Industries have been fast converting Japan, an agricultural country, into an industrial country. The farmers who mainly depend on meagre agricultural incomes have been able to improve remarkably their standard by devoting their spare time to home industries and small industries. The following data show the progress of the scheme of providing supplementary jobs to farmers in the vicinity of their homes :—

1937 ...	25	per cent had supplementary jobs
1938 ...	54.3	"
1941 ...	58.1	"
1942 ...	61.5	"

(Peak industrial and war production year)

1946 ...	46.4	per cent had supplementary jobs (after the war)
1947 ...	52	per cent had supplementary jobs

Many war workers have again become farmers after war. The decrease in supplementary jobs is natural."

#### 248. Surplus agricultural population :

Although it is not possible to calculate the exact surplus population in agriculture, we can

have an approximate idea of the position by referring to the results of the Sample Economic Surveys of the districts of Darrang and Sibsagar. In Darrang we find that as many as 80.5 per cent of the families are without land and judging by the amount of cultivable holdings, the number of landless families is 27 per cent of the total. The survey also shows that only 19.6 per cent of the holdings are in compact blocks while there it gives an average of 4.5 fragments per holding. 34 per cent of the holdings are 5 per cent or more. In Sibsagar, a district which has not experienced the heavy immigration of land-hungry Muslims of Pakistan, the landless families constitute 11.3 per cent while another 1.1 per cent holdings less than half a bigha of land. Also there are 4.4 fragments per holding; only 12.6 per cent of the total holdings are in compact blocks, while 37.8 per cent of the holdings have five fragments or more. About half the fragments measure below 2 bighas. The small size of actual family holdings contrasted with the economic holding by any definition should give us an idea of the surplus man power supported by agriculture. Let us say an economic holding is one in which land labour and capital are in such relationship that the labour of the family alone with a pair of bullocks and plough would be able to get the best income under the existing circumstances. If we assume this to be 15 acres and divide the area of all land holdings in Assam by it, we can easily find out how many hundreds and thousands of families at present supported by agriculture are surplus to its requirements.

This discussion brings home the magnitude of the surplus population in our agriculture as also the nature of underemployment amongst our agricultural classes. In other words we must realise what tremendous man power is wasted and how precarious the whole position is when such a huge number of persons falls back on agriculture as practically their sole occupation. Drawing attention to the tragedy which occurs due to almost complete dependence on agriculture when the crops fail either due to famines or floods, the Famine Commission observed as early as 1880 as follows :—

"A main cause of the disastrous consequences of Indian famines and one of the greatest difficulties in the way of providing reliefs in an effectual shape is to be found in the fact that the

great mass of the population directly depends on agriculture and that there is no other industry from which any considerable part of the community derives its support. The failure of the usual rains thus deprives the labouring classes as a whole not only of the ordinary supplies of food obtainable at prices within their reach, but also of the sole employment by which they can earn the means of procuring it. The complete remedy for this condition of things will be found only in the development of industries other than agriculture, and independent of fluctuations of seasons. With a population so dense as that of India, these considerations are of the greatest weight and they are rendered still more serious by the fact that the numbers who have no other employment than agriculture are in large parts of the country greatly in excess of what is really required for the cultivation of the land. So far as this is the case, the result must be that the part of the population which is in excess of the requirements of agriculture eats up the profit that would otherwise spring from the industry of the community. It is not surprising in a country thus situated that material progress is slow."

If we substitute the word 'floods' where the words 'famine or failure of rains' occur, the observation will apply with equal force to Assam, which by and large is fortunate enough not to suffer from any failure of rains but suffers almost equally from its super-abundance as well as the floods in the Brahmaputra and its other rivers which are increasing in their intensity year by year, especially after the war due to the great deforestation to meet the heavy demand of the war and more so after the great Assam earthquake of 1950, which has brought about topographical changes in the physical environment of Assam.

#### 249. Distribution Among Livelihood Classes and Dependency :

While considering the relative proportions of different agricultural classes, we have noticed that about 79 per cent of the people belonging to the agricultural classes are owner-cultivators, about 18 per cent are tenant-cultivators, whereas agricultural labourers and non-cultivating-owners of land are comparatively insignificant, forming just 2.4 and 1.2 per cent of the agricultural population, respectively. We can, therefore, say that in Assam there are only two main

agricultural classes, viz., the owner-cultivators and the tenant-farmers. On account of the absence of any land tenure regulations prevailing in the Assam Hills, the percentage of owner-cultivators therein is even larger, viz., 91 per cent, while the cultivators of unowned land form only 5.1 per cent.

While analysing the economic status of the people of different agricultural livelihood classes, we found that the largest percentage of economically inactive people was to be noticed among the non-cultivating owners of land, the percentage being as high as 62. Among the owner-cultivators, the percentage of non-earning dependents was 58.7, while amongst cultivators of unowned land, it was about 49, and it was found to be the lowest among the cultivating labourers, viz., 48. We have already examined the causes why non-cultivating owners should have the highest dependency of the non-earners and why this type of dependency should be lowest among the cultivating labourers. The latter cannot afford even to wait for their children and dependants finishing their education, before they get their help in augmenting the family income.

#### 250. Progress of Cultivation

In Section IX while discussing the progress of cultivation in relation to the growth of general population, we noticed a consistent fall in the area of cultivation per capita. We have seen from Table 4.35 that in 1921, every man, woman and child in Assam had each about 69 cents of land to draw sustenance from. It is now reduced to barely 59 cents. It must be clearly remembered that in arriving at these figures due allowance has been made for the fact that the growth of irrigation as well as double cropping of an area is a form of intensive cultivation even if it is not superficially extensive. We arrived at the above results in spite of making a very broad assumption regarding irrigated areas sown more than once for which no separate figures were available and regarding which we have taken over the lesser of the two areas viz., unirrigated double crop area or irrigated crop area. It is clear from a perusal of the table under reference that whatever may have been the intensity of the problem of population in relation to food production in the past, we can no longer allow ourselves to be lulled to sleep in the belief that

it is an age old problem for which we should not worry. The statistics clearly demonstrate that the problem of population outstripping cultivation is one which we are witnessing at least in our own life time and has got to be faced. As already mentioned, on account of the non-availability of statistics, we are not in a position to calculate the grain production capacity per capita and thus take into account the intensive aspect of cultivation due to improved agricultural techniques, application of manures, both green and artificial and the use of improved varieties of seeds and implements. During the last 30 years, the average net area sown has increased by a tremendous amount viz., 1,869,000 acres i.e., about 54 per cent, while population has increased by 42.5 per cent, in the same period. This apparently rather happy position is exploded when we consider the per capita cultivation which has fallen by 13.7 per cent in the same period. This is, of course, not to deny that even now there is scope for reclamation and colonisation of cultivable land in several undeveloped areas of the State but to draw pointed attention to the warning of Kingsley Davis.

"In the Indian region, because of the growth of population, the expansion of cultivation, the excessive grazing of goats and cattle, and the demand for wood, drastic deforestation has occurred. Despite conservation measures taken in 1855 and 1878 the process has gone so far that cow-dung must generally be used for fuel rather than for fertilizer. The loss of the forest cover on mountains and hills has brought increasingly destructive floods and has worsened the effects of drought".\*

Kingsley Davis has drawn our pointed attention to the imperative need of preserving our vast forest areas. Assam has already started paying a heavy price for the rather indiscriminate felling of trees and deforestation during the war period to meet the insatiable demands for the war efforts. The recent floods recurring not merely annually but more than once a year with almost religious regularity and with ever-increasing severity are a reminder to us that in our anxiety to expand cultivation, we must not push

it so far as to deplete beyond the safety margin our great national wealth viz., the forests, without which floods will be even more regular and severe. We have discussed the present position regarding the rapid population growth outstripping cultivation in the concluding section of Chapter I as well as Section IX of this Chapter. For the present, Assam is rather in the happy position of becoming a surplus State with a determined effort and also one of the few large areas in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent where extension of cultivation is even now possible. In most of the States, the limit for this has already been reached and there any significant extension of cultivated area is no longer possible. One may not be in that difficult position in which some sister States in India, e.g., Bombay and Madras find themselves on account of their continual food shortages. Unless we are careful and prompt in resorting to appropriate measures to control the vast masses of immigrants into Assam and to plan out an orderly and organised reclamation and colonisation of land and unless simultaneously we take measures to check the normal fecundity of the present population, we shall not continue to remain in the present position much longer. In fact, the story of many and continuous food crises in Assam in the last decade, especially after the war, is a clear warning that unless steps are taken to bring about a considerable increase in food production we may have to remain in the unenviable position of being a deficit State in spite of the possibilities of extending cultivation in the State itself.

#### 251. Rehabilitation of Agriculture :

It has been aptly remarked by Dr. Clouston that in India we have our depressed Classes, so also we have our depressed industries, and agriculture unfortunately, is one of them.

We have already referred to the possibilities of extensive cultivation in Section IX. Intensive cultivation is another remedy for increasing our food production. It is clearly indicated by Table 4.42 giving comparative figures of rice yield per acre in different parts of India and elsewhere.

\* 'Population of India and Pakistan', by Kingsley Davis, p. 206.



TABLE 4.42\*,

*Rice yield per acre in India, in some States of India and in some other countries.*

State/Country	Rice yield per acre in lbs.
Assam	958
Bombay	764
Madras	856
India	688
Italy	2,814
Japan	2,385
U. S. A	1,475
China	1,428
Burma	815
Thailand	803

While these figures indicate the great difference in the outturns, they do not by themselves mean that we could also produce 2,814 lbs. of rice per acre instead of 958 lbs. as we do. Agricultural development depends on social, economic and technical factors. Thus, for example, if the soil is extremely poor or the climatological circumstances are adverse, a farmer could hardly hope to reach the Italian standard even if he were able to bring all the resources of the Italian farmer to bear on his soil. The economic and social factors have been referred to by us to some extent in the preceding sections. They include the excessive dependence of our population on agriculture, the uneconomic size of holdings which is increasing with the great growth of population, universality of marriage and the application of the law of inheritance, fluctuating prices, lack of adequate credit and marketing facilities, the primitive ways of cultivation, in the use of seeds, manures, implements, irrigational facilities, or the adoption of improved cultural techniques, primitive marketing and transport organisation, poor breed of cattle, lack of secondary means of livelihood etc., apathy towards co-operative principles and co-operative or collective farming and a number of other defects in our agricultural economy. Kingsley Davis observes:

"India's disadvantage in this matter is not due to the natural deficiency of the land itself.

\* Figures supplied by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India.

As previously noted, the sub-continent includes great tracts of the richest land in the world. The low productivity is due rather to the way the land is handled—to the low proportion of capital invested in it—and hence is correlated with the farmers' poverty and density on the land. The smallness of the capital investment in farming is shown in numerous ways in the absence or inadequacy of conservation measures, in the primitive techniques of cultivation, in the non-use of both natural and artificial fertilizers, in the failure to improve the breeds of plants and animals. The inevitable consequence is that the land does not produce as much as it otherwise could".\*

If we are, therefore, to succeed in our aim of improving agriculture in Assam, the battle will have to be waged on many fronts; it will have to be an all-comprehensive one, not merely tackling the specific agricultural aspects of the problem viz., popularising the use of green and chemical manures, adoption of improved agricultural techniques and implements, better quality seed, extending irrigation, reclamation and afforestation but also to attack the problems of disease, illiteracy, lack of communication, etc. A beginning in this direction has already been made with the launching of 55 Community Development Projects in all States of India since 2nd October, 1952, which we have already referred to in Chapter II. Here, I shall content myself with re-emphasising three broad aspects.

First is the importance of the co-operative movement embracing all the activities of the life of our agriculturists. As early as 1937, the Reserve Bank of India, had stressed the importance of organising multi-purpose co-operative societies in our country where numerous single-purpose societies could not be easily worked on an effective and economic basis; the multi-purpose society could embrace the whole life of the agriculturist; It was explained how the credit societies were catering only to one of the needs of the agriculturist viz., credit, and even here they could meet only a part of the requirements. The agriculturist was, therefore, still largely dependent on the village *sowcar* for marketing his goods, for supplying him with the

\* 'Population of India and Pakistan' by Kingsley Davis, P. 208.

necessities of life viz., consumer goods and numerous other services that he was in need of. The result has been that the idea of effecting an economic regeneration of the Indian peasantry through co-operation has remained unfulfilled. Co-operators, official and non-official, have become increasingly aware of the limited utility of single purpose societies and during the past few years, the credit society has been yielding place to the multi-purpose society. Several States have drawn up schemes of organising such multi-purpose societies afresh or at least have begun to enlarge the functions of the existing credit societies by entrusting them with the work of distribution of essential goods to start with. The idea of having multi-purpose co-operative societies is thus obtaining a firm footing; this can be further extended and made more intensive use of before we can hope for a regeneration of the Indian agriculturist through the co-operative movement.

Second is the importance of the application of science to agriculture and the adoption of scientific agricultural techniques and implements by our farmers instead of allowing the fruits of science and research to remain buried in institutions or official files. As Dr. Karl Brandt,\* a former Director of the German Institute of Agricultural Marketing Research and a consultant on various problems relating to food and agriculture, and Adviser to the Government of the U. S. A. writes :—

“Among the many approaches to progress in the utilization of agricultural resources, none is more important and none more promising than the public support of education and research. It is by no means true that agricultural progress stems exclusively from public educational policies. Agriculture has developed through the ages by means of native ingenuity and inventive genius of individual farmers and group of farmers, and by the spreading of new techniques, new plants, and new breeds of animals.

“Yet during the last 150 years organized research and education has become increasingly responsible for better farming wherever governments have learned how to use them. No more immediate and direct approach to the improvement of farming is available than

the attempt to improve first of all, man, the chief production factor. No other public investment can ever pay better dividends than the provision for a large budget for agricultural education and research, and the competent administration of such programmes. One of the chief requirements of political democracy is that equal opportunity be given to all citizens. In agrarian countries where the majority of the people still live as peasants, the possibility of establishing government of, by and for the people is remote as long as education in general, and agricultural education in particular, have not laid the foundation for it. Agricultural education can do much to establish that basic equality of opportunity where it does not exist, and publicly financed research can strengthen it. The experience of many countries proves that it is possible and not too difficult to demonstrate the usefulness of agricultural education, even among illiterate farmers, and to induce the rural population to make use of the educational services.

“The value of agricultural education and research must be measured by the change they bring about on farms. The most resourceful institutions of agricultural learning and research, and the refined methods applied in both may only amount to wasted energy unless the results sooner or later become visible on farms. For this reason teaching must not only be applied to boys and girls of post-high-school age, but also simultaneously to practicing farm men and women. It is generally recognized, therefore, that applied adult education, including the so-called “agricultural extension service” of the United States, are the necessary complement of vocational training and education of younger people. An international exchange of students, teachers, extension agents, and research workers could do a great deal to give effective aid to the reconstruction of agriculture.”

The above words of Dr. Brandt about the possibility of inducing the rural population to make use of agricultural, educational and extension services should be borne in mind by all who criticise the Indian peasantry as backward, unprogressive and primitive in outlook. The present methods of Indian cultivators are anything but primitive or crude, based as they

\*Dr. Karl Brandt : “The Re-construction of World Agriculture”, P. 346.

are on centuries and millennia of experience and practice. Dr. Voelcker, Consulting Chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society, who came to India in 1889 observed: "To take the ordinary acts of husbandry, nowhere would one find better instances of keeping land scrupulously clean from weeds, of ingenuity in device of water raising appliances, of knowledge of soils and their constituents, as well as of the exact time to sow and to reap, than one would in Indian agriculture, and this not at its best alone, but at its ordinary level. Certain it is that I at least have never seen a more perfect picture of careful cultivation combined with hard labour, perseverance and fertility of resource than I have seen at many of the halting places in my tour." The fact is that the Indian peasant with his small capital cannot afford to take undue risks. Like all human beings and more so like agriculturists everywhere in the world, he too believes what he sees; he is prepared to adopt that the excellence of which is clearly demonstrated to him. *Pratyaksha pramanam* i.e., seeing is believing is ingrained in the very marrow of his bones. Hence once again like peasants everywhere in the world, he surely takes to better practices which are clearly **demonstrated** to yield better results; hence the vital importance of agricultural extension, not merely research, and demonstration on farms of the results of improved techniques, seeds, manures and implements. This has been clearly recognised in our new scheme of community development projects, recently inaugurated all over India to rehabilitate and revitalise our rural masses and their basic industry, viz., agriculture.

No body was more keenly alive to the plight of our agriculturists and none a more zealous advocate of the rehabilitation of our agriculture as well as our villages than the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. He once remarked, "the base and foundation of economic activity is agriculture. Years ago I read a poem in which the peasant is described as the father of the world. If God is the Provider, the cultivator is His hand. What are we going to do to discharge the debt we owe him? So long we have only lived on the sweat of his brow". For Gandhiji all other things came afterwards. His vision of India was to see the tiller of the soil himself well fed, and to let him have a sufficiency of fresh, pure milk and ghee and oil, fish, eggs, and meat if he were a non-vegetarian; the question of

drinking water supply and other things came next. In this picture cities and towns were to take their natural place and not to appear as unnatural, congested spots or boils on the body politic as they are today. For Gandhiji, healthy, nourishing food is the alpha and omega of rural economy; there are solid reasons for holding this view as the bulk of the peasants' meagre income goes to feed him and his family.

Per capita income in India for the depression year 1931-32 was estimated by Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao at Rs. 62 per annum. However, useful such a computation of the per capita income may be for academic purposes, the picture of conditions it unveils, as rightly remarked by J. C. Kumarappa, in his "Why the village movement?", is thoroughly misleading as regards the real circumstances prevailing in rural parts. A more reliable and closer approximation to facts may be obtained by a survey of actual incomes in villages. An average struck from figures collected from over 50 villages of Matar Taluka by Shri J. C. Kumarappa gives an income per capita of Rs. 14 per annum. This taluka is in a comparatively prosperous part of Gujarat which province itself is better off than many other provinces of India. Another way of getting a more accurate picture of the income in agricultural communities is derived from the land direct, and does not figure in terms of money. A calculation based on a survey of over 600 villages of the Central Provinces discloses a per capita income of Rs. 12 per annum. This amount will not cover even half the cost of a low subsistence diet. Therefore, even assuming that all the income is used for obtaining food, the people have to remain **half-fed** at best. No wonder Gandhiji considered the provision of healthy nourishing food and cheap home-spun cloth as the alpha and omega of rural economy; these were the two directions in which all efforts of Government and constructive workers were to be directed. Once we succeed in increasing our food production and assuring the masses of our people with a healthy, balanced and nourishing diet, India is bound to take a big leap forward towards prosperity and increasing the national standards of living. Once all the food that we need is produced within the frontiers of the country, it will be possible to save hundreds of crores of rupees of scarce foreign exchange we are spend-

ing not merely on buying food but also on paying equally heavy transport charges from foreign countries to our ports and diverts the same for the purchase of industrial and raw materials, equipment and machinery for the expansion of our industries.

This leads us on to the third point which I wish to emphasise here, viz., that the expansion of our industries and increase in industrial employment are vital to the welfare and prosperity of our agriculture. The interest of industry and agriculture are not conflicting or contradictory but complementary indeed very much so and the adoption of improved agricultural techniques will increase the purchasing power of our peasantry which in turn will increase the demand for the products of our home industries. On the other hand, the adoption of scientific methods of agriculture will themselves call for an increase in industrial activities to absorb the surplus man power released by the adoption of more modern and scientific methods of agriculture. The greater the industrialisation of the country, the less will be the dependence on merely one basic means of livelihood, viz., agriculture. An increase in industrial activities will also lead to the diversification of occupations which will go a long way in assuring additional sustaining power to our agricultural families in times of famines and floods.

Even in times of economic depressions like the Great Depression of 1928-32, when farmers suffered more than those depending on industries, industrial employment is essential to the welfare of agriculture.

We have already seen how on account of the overwhelming dependence on agriculture by far and away the most important single means of livelihood for the people and the absence of any alternative occupation, there is an immense surplus of man-power which is supported by agriculture at present all over India excluding Assam. Because of its own gravitation as a biological industry, its decentralization and many other retarding factors, agricultural production continues when industrial production and employment in towns and cities decline. The only intelligent approach to the problem of depression in agriculture as well as industry is the prevention of the idleness of a large part of the industrial plant and all the connected sectors of the economy. Once the wheels of industry hum,

agriculture will come back into its own almost automatically even when the national economy is suffering from a great depression. Our own Planning Commission has rightly stressed the imperative necessity of rehabilitating our agriculture as a condition precedent to an expansion of our industries and a sizable increase in the national dividend, mainly through an increase in the purchasing power of the agriculturists by increased agricultural production and employment as well as by encouraging subsidiary occupations among them.

The more our agriculture itself becomes an industry, the more it ceases to be merely a way by far and away the most important single means business proposition, we shall be able to have a much larger food production from the same area than obtained so far.

The classical economic theory, especially that advanced in the works of Malthus and Ricardo, assumed that due to the supposed "Law of diminishing returns" in agriculture and the progressive response of human fecundity to increased food supplies, the population growth would outrun the possible increment in food production. The relative shortage of food was supposed to keep the further increases in population in check, or else the curtailment of population growth by other causes would establish equilibrium between food resources and the population which has to live from them. Up to World War I the Malthusian doctrine was considered the indisputable and valid explanation of the basic conditions under which agriculture operates and under which the scarcity of food is inevitable. Since that time it has been recognized that progress in agricultural technology and scientific research in all the disciplines concerned with the production of plants and animals has made it possible to operate in agriculture with increasing returns on the human effort applied, in spite of the fact that there are rather narrow limits to the possible increments in physical yield per plant, per animal, and per unit of land. The western nations, according to Dr. Brandt, have developed such a large potential capacity for producing food that the major problem now, and for decades to come, is to avoid an over expansion of food production.\*

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\* Dr. Karl Brandt: "The Re-construction of World Agriculture", p. 333.

## 252. Protective foods :<sup>a</sup>

We shall deal with dairy and poultry farming, pisciculture and plantation of fruits, etc., in Chapter V dealing with the industrial population, but here it is necessary to refer to these sources of protective food and the great necessity of developing them. It is true that our fundamental problem is to grow enough food grains to meet our minimum requirements for keeping the body and soul together for a vast majority of our people. Kingsley Davis rightly remarks, "It seems hardly an exaggeration to say that lack of calories, vitamins and essential nutrients is the greatest single source of death in Indian sub continent. It produces specific dietary diseases that are fatal, it lowers resistance to most other diseases, and it lessens the strength, incentive and effective intelligence which are necessary if the people are to remedy their situation. We cannot ignore the vital relation between dietary deficiencies and the high mortality and morbidity rates."\*

The Nutrition Advisory Committee of the Indian Research Fund Association has suggested the following composition of a balanced diet to provide the various nutrients in sufficient quantities, taking into consideration the Indian dietary habits : side by side are given Shri J. C. Kumarappa's idea of a well-balanced rice diet and what, according to him, is the present, actual diet of an adult man.

TABLE 4.43

*Requirements per day in a balanced diet for an adult man*

	Oz.	Actual Diet†	Well-balanced Diet‡
Cereals	... 14	15.25	15
Pulses	... 3	0.5-1.5	3
Green leafy vegetables	... 4	0.5-1.0	4
Root vegetables	... 3	2.0-5.0	6
Other vegetables	... 3	2.0-5.0	6
Fruits	... 3	negligible	2
Milk	... 10	"	8
Sugar and Jaggery	... 2	"	-
Vegetable oil, ghee, etc.	... 2	less than	1.0 2
Fish and Meat	... 3	0.5-1.5	3‡
Eggs	... 1 egg.	-	-

\* 'The Population of India and Pakistan', by Kingsley Davis, p. 59.

† Shri J. C. Kumarappa : "Rice", 1947.

‡ When milk is absent from the diet or taken in negligible quantities.

The balanced diet of the type mentioned above is an ideal which is of theoretical value and academic interest in India. In actual practice, the vast majority of our people have to depend mostly on cereals and therefore, 16 ozs. of cereals per adult man are considered absolutely essential. "In the absence of any scope for an increase in the intake of other constituents in the diet for the country as a whole, adequacy of cereal consumption is important not only for efficiency of the worker but for maintaining life itself. While the rich and the well-to-do can replace a certain portion of cereals in their diet by fruits, milk, vegetables, meat, fish and eggs, the vast majority of the population, who are notoriously poverty stricken, have no access to such substitutes. In their case, therefore, a minimum supply of 16 ozs. of cereals per day per man is absolutely essential. If they get less there is a serious set-back in their efficiency, which is already low as the full quota of 2,800 calories is seldom available. But what is more tragic is the fact that any diminution in cereal consumption below a certain limit means actual starvation and death."\*

The findings of the United Nations Conference on "Food and Agriculture" held at Hot springs (in 1943) also point to the same direction. They are :

"Three-quarters of 1,150 million inhabitants of Asia were living below decent health standards and of them India probably has the largest share."

Both during and after the war, the food situation in Assam along with the rest of the country has definitely worsened instead of improving. The shortage of nutrition foods like milk, fruits and eggs became aggravated. While before the war there was a "dearth of money and a deluge of food", in the post-war period there has been a "plethora of funds and a paucity of food". The food shortage is accompanied by equally acute shortage of prime necessities of life and the country is faced with "a whole array of dangerous and enduring enemies—poverty, squalor, ill-health, illiteracy, under-nourishment and unemployment." Sir Byod Orr has rightly remarked in this connection that

"Permanent under-feeding and periodic starvation is a rule in India. In normal times

\* Baljit Singh, "Population and Food Planning in India".

about 30 per cent of the population do not get 'enough' to eat, while a much larger section of the population have to be satisfied almost invariably with ill-balanced diet containing a preponderance of cereals and insufficient "protective foods" of higher nutritive value. Intake of milk, pulses, meat, fresh fruits and leafy vegetables and fish is generally insufficient."

Dr. Akroyd also goes on in a similar vein :

"To the nutrition worker our food situation in India is thoroughly unsatisfactory in normal time.....The majority of the population lives on a diet far remote from the most moderate standards of adequate nutrition. If India depends entirely on what she can herself produce, a very large increase in the production of various foods is necessary to raise the existing standard to a satisfactory level. These may be roughly indicated as cereals 30 per cent increase, pulses 100 per cent, milk and milk products 300-400 per cent, meat, fish and eggs several hundred per cent, vegetables, particularly green leafy vegetables 100 per cent or thereabout."

Discussing the food habits of the people in different parts of the country, Pravakar Sen points out, "Wide diversity of soil and climate in the country makes for a large diversity in the types of food produced in its different parts. Broadly speaking, as we go from east to west in the country or from south to north, rice-eating gradually yields place to wheat-eating. An average Assamese takes 80 per cent of his diet by weight in the form of rice, an average Bangalee, 75 per cent rice and 5 per cent wheat; an average Behari, 70 per cent rice, 10 per cent wheat and maize; and an average inhabitant of Madhya Pradesh, 40 per cent rice, 25 per cent wheat and 15 per cent millets. An average Madrassi takes 35 per cent rice and 45 per cent ragi; an average person in the State of Bombay, 30 per cent rice, 35 per cent wheat and 10 per cent millets; and an average resident of Uttar Pradesh, 10 per cent rice, 60 per cent wheat and 10 per cent millets; finally, an average Punjabi takes 75 per cent of his diet by weight in the form of wheat."

The Health Survey and Development Committee have pointed out the nature of the diet of our millions. An insufficient and ill-balanced diet giving only about 1750 calories per day

(as against the needed 2400 to 3000 calories) is typical of diet consumed by millions in India.

Pointing out the deficiency in food supply, Kingsley Davis remarks, "The deficiency in food supply has been estimated as 17 per cent in terms of calories, 38 per cent in terms of proteins and 64 per cent in terms of fats. Between a third and a half of Indian families are undernourished."† Again, the Public Health Commissioner to the Government of India rightly remarked in his report for 1935 "No preventive campaign against malaria, against tuberculosis or against leprosy, no maternity relief or child welfare activities, are likely to achieve any great success, unless those responsible recognise the vital importance of the factor of defective nutrition and from the very start give it their most serious attention. Abundant supplies of quinine and the multiplication of tuberculosis hospitals, sanatoria, leprosy colonies, maternity and child welfare centres are no doubt desirable, if not essential, but none of these go to the root of the matter. The first essentials for the prevention of disease are a high standard of health, a better physique and a greater power of resistance to infection. These can only be attained if the food of the people is such as will give all the physiological and nutritional requirements of the human frame."†

Undernutrition and malnutrition, observes Dr. Brandt, have, quite aside from the human suffering they involve, many evil economic, social, and political effects. They stunt the growth of the young, prevent adults from working efficiently, cause diseases, lower the public morale, and foster political radicalism.

The U. N. Conference on Food and Agriculture in 1943, declared its belief that "the goal of freedom from want of food, suitable and adequate for the health and strength of all peoples, can be achieved." It stated, furthermore, "There has never been enough food for the health of all the people. This is justified neither by ignorance nor by the harshness of nature. Production of food must be greatly expanded; we now have knowledge of the means by which this can be done. It requires imagination and firm will on the part of each Government and people to make use of that knowledge."

† 'The Population of India and Pakistan' by Kingsley Davis, p. 206.

And again: "The first cause of hunger and malnutrition is poverty. It is useless to produce more food unless man and nations provide the markets to absorb it. There must be an expansion of the whole world economy to provide the purchasing power sufficient to maintain an adequate diet for all. With full employment, in all countries, enlarged industrial production, the absence of exploitation, an increasing flow of trade within and between countries, an orderly management of domestic and international investment economic equilibrium, the food which is produced can be made available to all people.

The primary responsibility lies with each nation for seeing that its own people have the food needed for life and health; steps to this end are for national determination. But each nation can fully achieve its goal only if all work together."

**253. The need of controlling population growth :**

The problem and necessity of controlling population growth with its different implications has already been examined in the concluding section of Chapter I. The discussion in this chapter relating to food production as well as the condition of our basic industry of agriculture further emphasises the need of adopting a progressive social policy of birth control. In the

context of present conditions all over Asia, especially S. E. Asia not excluding India, the need for birth control is self-evident, as estimated at the U. N. Conference on food and agriculture at Hot Springs that three-fourths of inhabitants of Asia were living below decent health standards. According to Radhakamal Mukerjee, the chronic under-feeding of at least one-third of the population is at the root of India's low standard of health and inefficiency in every field.\* Along with continuing to do all that we can for rehabilitating our agriculture, the need for country-wide birth-control propaganda is self-evident.

Describing the need of countrywide Birth Control propaganda, Radhakamal Mukerjee says, "A rational family planning and education of the masses in birth-control must be accepted as the most effective means of combating population increase. The small family system, deliberately planned and integrated with other habits and traditions which regulate different sides of domestic life, must now be adopted in India as the social and ethical norm, and such a custom as polygamy, which, by encouraging a large family, has become an obvious economic misfit, must be declared illegal."†

\* 'Food Planning for Four Hundred Millions' by Radhakamal Mukerjee, p. 51.

† Ibid, p. 217.



## CHAPTER V

# NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 254. Non-Agricultural Classes :

Out of a total population of 9,043,707 in Assam, the overwhelming majority, as we have already seen, 6,632,992 belongs to agricultural Classes and only 2,410,715 belong to non-agricultural classes. Thus the non-agricultural population of Assam is 26.7 per cent of the entire population, against 43 per cent in West Bengal, 39 per cent in Bombay, 14 in Bihar and 21 in Orissa. In the preceding Chapter, the distribution of agricultural classes has been discussed at length. In this Chapter, the non-agricultural classes and their economic classification will be dealt with. As mentioned before, the non-agricultural classes are :—

- V.—Production other than cultivation;
- VI.—Commerce;
- VII.—Transport; and
- VIII.—Other services and miscellaneous sources.

#### 255. Economically Inactive Persons :

It should be noted here that Class VIII includes not only persons who are engaged in occupations which fall under “Other services and miscellaneous sources” of the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme, but also persons who are economically inactive. These

include the following categories, the details of which are given in the fly-leaf of Economic Table B-III :—

- (1) Persons living principally on income from non-agricultural property;
- (2) Persons living principally on pensions, remittances, scholarships and funds;
- (3) Inmates of jails, asylums and recipients of doles;
- (4) Beggars and vagrants;
- (5) All other persons living principally on income not derived from any economic activity.

The total number of self-supporting persons falling under this economically inactive category is 14,680 in Assam (7,679 males and 7,001 females), all, except 645 in the Hills, being found in the Plains Natural Division.

#### 256. Reference to Statistics :

The main Economic Tables for the 1951 Census are contained in Part II-B of the Census Report. As pointed out before they are based on the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme, 1951, prepared by the Registrar General of India, and reproduced in the same volume. As mentioned in Section VI—(Livelihood Pattern) of Chapter I, it is of the utmost importance to study the economic classification scheme to

appreciate the definitions of the terms used and the significance of the data reviewed in the report and also to guard against the possibility of erroneous comparison of figures with figures collected in different economic surveys in the country and not really comparable with the figures collected at the 1951 Census.

Subsidiary Tables of the 5th series given in Part I-B of the Report form the basis of the review contained in this Chapter. Subsidiary Table 5.1 gives the proportion of non-agricultural classes in the State and the different districts and also shows the classification of 10,000 persons of all non-agricultural classes into each class and sub-class. The classification according to the secondary economic status, viz., employers, employees and independent workers is for the first time undertaken during the 1951 Census and included in Subsidiary Table 5.1.

Subsidiary Tables 5.1A and 5.1B contain the same information for the rural and urban areas as that which is given in Subsidiary Table 5.1 for the general population. 5.1C gives the same information for all non-agricultural classes.

Subsidiary Tables 5.2 to 5.5 deal with each of the non-agricultural livelihood classes separately and show the number per 10,000 persons of each livelihood class in each sub-class. Numbers per 10,000 self-supporting persons of each livelihood class, who are employers, employees and independent workers are also given in these Subsidiary Tables and these Tables further contain a complete analysis of the secondary means of livelihood of 10,000 persons of each livelihood class belonging to the non-agricultural category. Subsidiary Tables 5.2A, 5.3A, 5.4A and 5.5A give the same information for the rural and the urban population.

Subsidiary Tables 5.7 to 5.17 give the territorial distribution of 10,000 self-supporting persons in different industries and services in the State by divisions and sub-divisions. Subsidiary Tables 5.7A, 5.8A.....5.17A give the same information for the rural and the urban population.

The District Index of Non-Agricultural Occupations given in Part I-B of the Report gives the details of the actual number of persons engaged in the various divisions, sub-divisions and groups of Industries and Services in the State and Natural Divisions.

#### 256A. Comparability of the statistics with those of the previous Censuses :

The question of comparison of economic data collected at the different censuses has been discussed already (Chapter I, Section VI), and need not be repeated here. But the caution given there should be borne in mind so that the danger of trying to compare figures which may be really not comparable and drawing erroneous conclusions therefrom may be avoided.

#### 257. Reliability of the Data :

I have discussed the problem of the reliability of the economic data collected at the census in considerable detail in Section I, Chapter IV, which may be again referred to in this connection. There is no need to cover the same ground again. I, therefore, content myself with reproducing my instructions to the sorters how to proceed with correct classification according to the secondary economic status. This would be useful in understanding the proportions of the secondary economic status of self-supporting persons, viz., employers, employees and independent workers.

#### Instructions for Sorter's Ticket O

"With regard to the first four Livelihood Classes I, II, III and IV under Agriculture, you will have no trouble. For Non-Agricultural Classes V, VI, VII and VIII, carefully study the answers recorded against Q.10 and decide to which of these four Classes the particular Means of Livelihood belongs. Read Appendix I (pages 3-5), note on page 10 and Appendix IV showing the divisions and subdivision of Industries and Services, on page 14-25 of the 1951 Census Tabulation Plan carefully. Remember the following points :—

- (1) The general rule in respect of classifying employees is that every employee is to be classified with reference to the commodity produced or service rendered by his employer.
- (a) There are, however, the following exceptions to this rule in which you must classify the employees with reference to their own activity and without reference to that of their employer :—
  - (i) Persons actually engaged in production;
  - (ii) Persons actually engaged in commerce;

- (iii) Persons actually engaged in transport;
- (iv) Members of learned professions like doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers and others *e.g.*, scavengers, etc., for which special sub-divisions are provided in Appendix IV will go under Livelihood Class VIII, without reference to their employers.

If a man is engaged as a truck driver in a tea-garden or in a commercial firm, you must classify him under the head "Transport" and not under the head "Production". But a manager or clerk engaged in the same tea-garden or commercial firm must be classified respectively under "Production" or "Commerce" because he is to be classified "with reference to the commodity produced or service rendered by his employer".

- (b) Another important **exception** to the general rule is about domestic servants. These servants must be classified under Livelihood Class VIII "Other services and miscellaneous sources" without reference to the nature of their employer's

work. Even drivers of private cars will, therefore, be classed under this head and not under "Transport".

- (2) The second rule of classification is that all employers and all independent workers, like petty shop-keepers, etc., who do not employ anyone else in their small business or other work must be classified with reference to the **commodity produced or service rendered by them individually**.
- (3) There are certain independent workers, who produce certain articles and sell them and the question arises whether they are to be classed under "Production" or "Commerce". Thus, for example, a cobbler, who prepares shoes and sells them himself, should be classed under "Production" because according to the rule mentioned under (2) above he is to be classed with reference to the 'commodity he produces'."

## SECTION II

### NON-AGRICULTURAL POPULATION RATIOS; SELF-SUPPORTING PERSONS AND DEPENDANTS; SECONDARY MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD OF NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES

#### 258. Non-Agricultural Population Ratios in Assam :

Subsidiary Tables 5.1, 5.1A and 5.1B in Part I-B, of the Report give the proportion of non-agricultural population in different parts of the State. The position as regards the State and its Natural Divisions is summarised in Table 5.1 below :—

TABLE 5.1

*Percentage distribution of non-agricultural population*

State and Natural Division	Percentage of non-agricultural classes in		
	General Population	Rural Population	Urban Population
Assam	.. 26.7	23.5	93.5
Assam Plains	.. 28.5	25.6	93.1
Assam Hills	.. 15.1	9.8	95.4
Manipur	.. 16.6	16.6	..
Tripura	.. 24.7	20.3	86.7

It will be noticed that in the rural areas of Assam only 23.5 per cent of the population belongs to non-agricultural classes while in the urban areas the percentage is 93.5. For Madhya Pradesh, the percentage is 14.6 for the rural and 84.3 for the urban areas. The actual population of non-agricultural classes living in urban areas, it should be noted, is 387,642 only against 2,023,073 in the rural areas.

#### 259. Non-Agricultural Population Ratios in the Natural Divisions :

Out of a total population of 7,805,558 in Assam Plains as many as 5,581,584 belong to agricultural classes and 2,223,974 only to non-agricultural classes. In Assam Hills 1,059,408 belong to agricultural classes and only 186,741 to non-agricultural classes out of a total

population of 1,246,149. Thus the percentage of non-agricultural classes in Assam Plains is 28.5 against 15.1 in Assam Hills.

Assam Plains (28.5), have a much higher percentage of non-agricultural classes than Assam Hills, (15.1); this is true regarding their rural population as well, 25.6 per cent in the Plains and 9.8 per cent in the Assam Hills. It is only in urban population that Assam (93.5), shows a slightly larger proportion of non-agricultural classes. Assam Hills return an even larger proportion viz., 95.4 per cent than Assam Plains (93.1). The districts which have a high percentage of non-agriculturists in the general population as compared to the State and Natural Divisions are :—

	General	Rural
Lakhimpur.	44.1	42.7
Cachar.	40.1	36.8
Sibsagar.	35.5	33.9
Darrang.	29.4	27.8
United K. & J. Hills.	30.6	19.7

We can ignore safely the N. E. F. A. areas. Lakhimpur is obviously at the top, being the most industrialized district of Assam with its Coal, Oil and Tea Industries. It is followed by Cachar not merely because of its large Tea Industry but also the arrival of nearly a lakh of refugees who generally take to some non-agricultural means of livelihood to eke out a living. The high percentage of non-agricultural population in the United K. and J. Hills District is due to its being the headquarters of the State with its ever-expanding administrative activities and Departments as well as its flourishing trade in which the Khasis excel. The districts with the smallest percentage of non-agricultural classes in Assam Plains are Goalpara, (14.8), and Nowgong (14.6); in Assam Hills, those which stand out are Naga Hills (5.9), and Garo Hills (5.0).

#### 260. Primary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Classes :

The primary economic status of the non-agricultural classes is analysed in Table 5.2 :—

TABLE 5.2  
*Primary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Population (General)*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning Dependants	Earning Dependants
Assam ..	41	52	7
Assam Plains ..	41	52	7
Assam Hills ..	40	55	5
Manipur ..	27	46	27
Tripura ..	32	64	4

Amongst the non-agricultural classes in Assam 52 per cent are doing just nothing, being non-earning dependants. The corresponding percentage for agricultural classes is about 59. The percentage of earning dependants among non-agricultural classes is also lower being 6 compared to 17 for the agricultural classes. The pattern for Assam Plains is identical with that of Assam. Assam Hills, however, shows a slightly smaller proportion of self-supporting persons (40), and earning dependants (5) as a result of which the percentage of non-earning dependants is 3 per cent higher than that in Assam Plains or Assam and stands at 55 per cent of total population against 51 per cent of non-earning dependants in the agricultural classes.

The percentage of earning dependants in non-agricultural classes which is 7 for Assam and Assam Plains and 5 for Hills is much smaller than the percentage of earning dependants in all agricultural classes. The actual proportion in agricultural classes is almost three times that in non-agricultural classes. The reasons are clear: firstly, there is much greater scope in agricultural classes to join in the family occupation of agriculture which demands only at certain periods of the year all the labour the whole family can provide, and more; secondly, once the peak period is over, and the slack months appear, the agriculturist or his wife and children can take to some cottage or home industry e.g. weaving. Thirdly, the non-agricultural occupations are far more specialised. Even with the best will in the world the dependants of those who follow them cannot join in their family occupations except to a certain extent in handicrafts.

There is little to comment on the break-up according to primary economic status of the rural population of Assam and Assam Plains as compared with the general population. In fact there is a complete identity of dependency pattern in the entire rural population *inter se* in Assam and its Division; the percentages of self-supporting persons (43), earning dependants (7) and non-earning dependants (50) are the same in Assam and the Natural Divisions. The dependency pattern for urban population, however, differs from that for the rural and general population in several important respects; firstly, the percentage of earning dependants (3) is far lower in the urban areas of Assam and its Natural Divisions; secondly, self-supporting persons are considerably lower for Urban Assam and its Divisions; finally, the non-earning dependants are correspondingly far larger, by 14 per cent in Assam, 15 per cent in the Plains and 12 per cent in the Hills.

Tea districts show comparatively larger percentage of self-supporting persons, e.g., Lakhimpur (48), Sibsagar (46) and Darrang (46). Those who would normally be content with the status of earning dependants in purely agricultural districts like Kamrup (31), Goalpara (36) can stand forth in their census-bestowed dignity as self-supporting persons in tea districts; otherwise there need not be much difference about the status within the families which follow non-agricultural occupations anywhere. The percentage of self-supporting persons in Cachar is only 36, similar to that of any purely agricultural district, although Cachar, is one of the great tea districts of Assam. A part of the explanation is the arrival of the refugees among whom there is little scope or opportunity for becoming self-supporting persons immediately for as many members of families as would happen in normal cases. If the primary status of population of Cachar minus refugees is considered we get 39 per cent of self-supporting persons which is definitely higher than other purely agricultural districts. In Assam Hills the district of Lushai Hills returns the smallest percentage of self-supporting persons (30) against the average for its Division which is 40. The above reasons apply for Darrang and Lakhimpur returning the smallest percentage under non-earning dependants, 46 in each case against 58 in Kamrup and 57 in Goalpara. The non-earning dependants of

Cachar who form the highest percentage of all plains districts in Assam, viz., 59 drop down to 56 when refugees are not considered. Earning dependants are the highest in the purely agricultural districts of Kamrup (11) and as a rule appear to be higher in all agricultural districts, e.g., Nowgong (9) and Goalpara (8) for reasons already explained. Among the autonomous districts Garo Hills takes the palm in returning 11 per cent of its non-agricultural population as earning dependants against 4 in United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and 5 in United K. & J. Hills district. Lushai Hills show by far the highest percentage of non-earning dependants 64 against 52 in Naga Hills and 54 in United K. & J. Hills.

#### 261. Rural-urban break-up of the Primary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 5.3 given below summarises the primary economic status with the rural and urban break-up :—

TABLE 5.3

#### *Rural-urban break-up of the Primary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam—			
Rural	.. 43	50	7
Urban	.. 33	64	3
Assam Plains—			
Rural	.. 43	50	7
Urban	.. 32	65	3
Assam Hills—			
Rural	.. 43	50	7
Urban	.. 35	62	3
Tripura—			
Rural	.. 33	62	5
Urban	.. 29	70	1

Table 5.3 shows that the percentage of non-earning dependants amongst non-agricultural classes for the urban areas is as high as 64 per cent compared to 50 per cent only in the rural areas of the State. Similarly, the earning dependants in the urban areas are barely 3 per cent while in the rural areas they are 7 per cent, i.e., about two and half times the percentage in the urban areas. One obvious reason for this is that in towns the dependants of well-to-do people do not work partly because of

social customs and want of adequate facilities and partly because larger numbers get immobilised from productive activities by availing of the educational facilities in towns and partly due to the fact that they do not find it necessary to work, as a non-agricultural family as a rule enjoys a higher and steadier income than its agricultural counterpart in villages. In the rural areas, on the other hand, the social barriers are less effective and facilities, although grossly inadequate, do exist to a certain extent to enable the dependants of the non-agriculturals also to take up subsidiary employments. Thus the far greater dependency in urban areas as compared to the rural is due to the comparatively higher incomes and higher standard of living in the urban areas and the consequent disinclination as well as lack of necessity on the part of the dependants to take up any work themselves.

#### 262. Primary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Classes of Assam compared with Part 'A' States of India.

The comparison of total non-agricultural classes and each of the non-agricultural classes V, VI, VII and VIII of Assam with those of Part 'A' States of India, has already been given in Chapter I, Section VI; it need not, therefore, be repeated here. Table 5.4 below gives a break-up of all non-agricultural classes according to their Primary Economic Status into self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants.

TABLE 5.4

#### *Primary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Classes of Assam compared with Part 'A' States of India*

State	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
India ..	31	63	6
Assam ..	41	52	7
Bihar ..	30	66	4
West Bengal ..	39	59	2
Madras ..	27	69	4
Bombay ..	31	62	7
Madhya Pradesh ..	31	55	14
Punjab ..	26	63	9
Orissa ..	31	60	9
U. P. ..	33	61	6

We immediately find out two outstanding characteristics. First Assam has the least proportion, 52 per cent only, of non-earning dependants of any State in India; second, it has by far the largest percentage (41) of self-supporting persons among Part 'A' States of India. The percentage of self-supporting persons in India, as a whole, is only 31 whereas Assam has 10 per cent more, against a bare 27 per cent in Punjab and Madras each. The percentage of non-earning dependants of non-agricultural classes in the country is 63. In Madras the proportion is about 70 per cent and in Assam it is just over 50. There is nothing remarkable regarding the proportion of earning dependants among all non-agricultural classes in Assam, which is 7 per cent as against 6 in India and 2 only in West Bengal. In fact, Assam occupies exactly a middle position, viz., fifth among the 9 Part 'A' States of India, having neither too large nor too small a proportion. The main reason for the overwhelmingly large percentage of self-supporting persons in Assam and a correspondingly low percentage of non-earning dependants is the factor of the Tea Industry. It is mainly rural and agricultural in its scope and both children and women have as much scope as adult males therein to work on the tasks according to their capacity and age and they have greater chances of being self-supporting than in most other industries. It also explains why we find that in Part 'A' States, Assam has the lowest percentage of persons in the non-agricultural classes, who just do nothing.

#### 263. Non-Agricultural Population Ratio for Manipur and Tripura :

##### 263A. Manipur :

Non-agricultural classes in Manipur form 16.6 per cent of its general population. Its break-up for urban and rural is not available because for the preparation of economic tables, the whole state of Manipur was treated as purely rural. The primary economic status of its non-agricultural population presents a pattern that is quite different from that of Assam or its natural divisions. It has an extremely high percentage of earning dependants, viz., 27 which is

nearly four times that of Assam or its Plains and more than five times as large as that of Assam Hills. It has only 46 per cent of its non-agricultural population, who are non-earning dependants, against 52 for Assam and 64 for its sister Part 'C' State of Tripura. It has the lowest percentage of self-supporting persons, viz., 27, of all natural divisions dealt with in this report. Its total non-agricultural population is 25,951 (17,036 males and 8,915 females).

#### 263B. Tripura :

The non-agricultural classes in Tripura, number 50,760, of whom 42,955 are males and 7,805 are females. It means that about one-fourth of the total general population of Tripura, consists of non-agricultural classes, a proportion only slightly less than that of Assam (26.7). In the rural population of Tripura, its non-agricultural classes comprise 20.3 per cent against 23.5 for Assam. Tripura has a lower proportion of non-agricultural classes in urban population, viz., 86.7 per cent, than either Assam or its natural divisions. In the primary economic status of its non-agricultural general population, Tripura resembles none of the natural divisions with which this report deals. Nearly two-thirds are non-earning dependants whereas another one-third are self-supporting persons. Only a negligible percentage of 4 are earning dependants. The break-up by rural and urban is of some interest. Of the rural population, exactly one-third are self-supporting persons, whereas over three fifths are non-earning dependants. Earning dependants are only 5 per cent. The urban pattern is strikingly different from that of any natural division of Assam. It has only 1 per cent among its earning dependants and 29 among self-supporting persons, the remaining seven-tenth constituting non-earning dependants.

#### 264. Distribution of non-agricultural population in Livelihood Classes :

The distribution of the non-agricultural population in each of the Livelihood Classes V to VIII, in terms of percentages, is given below in Table 5.5, which shows that the bulk of the people of non-agricultural classes, of the general

population of Assam, viz., 55 per cent, belong to Livelihood Class V (Production other than cultivation) and another 25 per cent to Livelihood Class VIII (Other services and miscellaneous sources). Thus four-fifths of the total non-agricultural population belong to these two livelihood classes. Of the remaining 20 per cent, 15 per cent is claimed by Commerce and a bare 5 per cent by Transport.

Assam Plains differs only slightly from Assam as a whole. Class V in the Plains is 3 per cent larger and Class VIII smaller by 2 per cent, other two Classes retaining more or less the same proportions. The Hills division, however, shows a pattern which is strikingly different from Assam or Assam Plains at least in respect of Livelihood Classes V, VI and VIII. Tea, which is included under Production other than cultivation, is in abundance in Assam Plains, but is conspicuous by its absence in Assam Hills. Scope for other petty industries and other crafts also is very limited there. As a result we see only 25 per cent of the non-agricultural population of the Assam Hills Division in this Class while in the Plains it is nearly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times larger. There is less of Commerce and Transport in the Hills than in the Plains; hence by far the largest majority of the non-agricultural population of Assam Hills is found in Class VIII, i.e., Other services and miscellaneous sources. This explains why Assam Hills have as high as 56 per cent of its total non-agricultural population in Livelihood Class VIII, constituting by far the largest Class against 25 per cent for Assam and 23 per cent only for the Plains. Thus in the Hills as compared with the Plains the roles of Classes V and VIII are exactly reversed. Class VIII in the Hills exceeds Class V almost by as much as Class V does Class VIII in the Plains. Commerce and Transport are of very little importance in Assam and they do not show any wide divergence among the natural divisions. Where there are some other productive activities they are recorded under Class V; all the rest going under the residuary Class VIII. Under the circumstances where employment under productive activities is less, non-agricultural occupations will be of those residuary categories which are lumped together under Class



VIII. The discussion is summarised in Table 5.5 given below :—

TABLE 5.5

*Percentage of each Livelihood Class of non-agricultural population*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF			
	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Assam ..	55	15	5	25
Assam Plains	58	14	5	23
Assam Hills	24	15	5	56
Manipur ..	42	25	3	30
Tripura ..	24	26	2	48

#### 265. Salient features districtwise :

Livelihood Class V is strikingly predominant as we should expect in Lakhimpur where it constitutes 78.2 per cent of the entire non-agricultural population. Other tea districts of Sibsagar (74), Darrang (68), and Cachar (51) are equally prominent in this Class. In the purely agricultural districts where tea industry does not exist or is not prominent, *e.g.*, Kamrup (24), Goalpara (30) and Nowgong (36), the percentage in Class V falls drastically. Goalpara shows primacy in commerce with 29 per cent of its population under Class VI against Lakhimpur (8), Sibsagar (9) and Darrang (11). Transport, as a means of Livelihood for non-agricultural population, is equally unimportant in all districts except Nowgong where it contains as much as 11 per cent of the population and Kamrup (10 per cent). Goalpara again stands out for having as many as 35.3 per cent under Class VIII which is second only to Kamrup (40), against 10 per cent in Lakhimpur and 14 in Sibsagar.

In Assam Hills, Class VIII is of the greatest prominence in Lushai Hills where it constitutes 70 per cent of the entire non-agricultural population against 62 per cent in Naga Hills, 58 in the United K. & J. Hills, but barely 35 in the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. Transport attains a major significance only in the district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills where it contains 35.3 per cent of the total non-agricultural population against hardly 2 per cent in United K. & J. Hills and 1 per cent in Garo Hills. Garo Hills returns the highest per-

tage under Commerce (31) and second highest under Class V (23) being less than only that in United K. & J. Hills (25).

#### 265. Rural and urban break-up of the non-agricultural population in Livelihood Classes :

In Chapters II and III the distribution of the general population in rural and urban areas has already been discussed. I shall now proceed to examine such distribution in individual Livelihood Classes. The rural and urban break-up of each of the non-agricultural Classes V to VIII is summarised in Table 5.6 below :—

TABLE 5.6

*Percentage of each Livelihood Class of non-agricultural population (Rural and Urban break-up)*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS DEPENDENT ON			
	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Assam :				
Rural ..	52	12	4	22
Urban ..	18	29	8	45
Assam Plains :				
Rural ..	64	12	4	20
Urban ..	19	32	9	40
Assam Hills :				
Rural ..	32	14	5	49
Urban ..	12	18	3	67
Tripura :				
Rural ..	27	24	1	48
Urban ..	15	31	5	49

It can easily be noted that the distribution of non-agricultural population in different Livelihood Classes is broadly similar in the general and the rural population. In Assam and Assam Plains Class VIII of rural population is slightly smaller. In the Hills, however, the divergence is wider. Class V in rural population is as large as 32 per cent against only 24 per cent in the general population; in Class VIII, the respective percentages are 49 and 56.

#### 266A. Distribution in rural areas of Livelihood Class V :

It is interesting to find that Production other than cultivation supports a far greater proportion of non-agricultural population in rural areas than in the urban. This is natural because the tea industry with its plantations flourishes almost solely in the rural areas; so also most of the handicrafts including the famous weaving industry of Assam. In Section VI, Chapter II, the

districts in which more than 10 per cent of the rural population is supported by Livelihood Class V were individually named and discussed at some length. Apart from the whole of Assam Plains, Natural Division which falls in this category, these districts are: Cachar, Darrang, Sib-sagar and Lakhimpur. Three areas of the N. E. F. A., viz., Abor Hills, Tirap Frontier Tract and Balipara Frontier Tract were also mentioned. A perusal of Subsidiary Table 5.1A in Part I-B shows that in addition to them, all the remaining districts in the Plains, e.g., Nowgong (45 per cent), Goalpara (33), Kamrup (27) and one district in the Hills, viz., the United K. & J. Hills (37) also contain a very large proportion of the people of all non-agricultural classes of the rural areas in Livelihood Class V. Even the Mishmi Hills in the N. E. F. A. comes out here with 38 per cent.

**266B. Distribution in Livelihood Class VIII in rural areas :**

Livelihood Class VIII, i.e., Other services and miscellaneous sources is next in importance to Livelihood Class V in the rural areas as will be seen from Table 5.6 above. In Assam and Plains it is much larger than Classes VI and VII combined, whereas in the Hills, it is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times as large.

**266C. Distribution in Livelihood Class VI (Commerce) and Class VII (Transport) in rural areas :**

A comparison of Subsidiary Table 5.1A with Subsidiary Table 2.5 shows the following pattern of distribution of the non-agricultural classes in the rural areas under Livelihood Class VI (Commerce) and Class VII Transport) :—

**TABLE 5.7**  
*Distribution of entire rural population and non-agricultural population in rural areas compared*

State and Natural Division	Percentage of entire rural population in Livelihood Class		Percentage of non-agricultural classes only in rural areas in Livelihood Class	
	VI Commerce	VII Transport	VI Commerce	VII Transport
Assam ..	2.77	0.99	11.80	4.23
Assam Plains	2.99	1.07	11.69	4.19
Assam Hills	1.33	0.48	13.62	4.94

It will be observed that though Assam Hills has a smaller percentage of entire rural population in Livelihood Classes VI and VII than

Assam Plains, the percentages of non-agricultural classes only in rural areas in Livelihood Classes VI and VII, which are 13.62 and 4.94, are higher in the Hills Division than in the Plains Division. Here the percentages are 11.69 and 4.19, respectively.

**266D. Distribution of people in different Livelihood Classes in urban areas :**

Subsidiary Table 3.7 in Part I-B of the Report gives the distribution of 10,000 persons in all Livelihood classes in the urban areas. Table 5.6 above gives the percentage distribution of persons of all non-agricultural classes only who reside in the urban areas. In both these different sets of figures Assam Plains shows a larger percentage under Class V than Assam Hills. Class V has the largest percentage in Lakhimpur (25) against Sib-sagar (19) and Nowgong (17). Commerce, i.e., Class VI supports well over one third of the total non-agricultural population of urban Kamrup (37 per cent); even in Goalpara it just exceeds one third. Transport is a negligible class all through except in Nowgong where it contains 27 per cent of the non-agricultural population. The lowest is 4.6 in the case of Kamrup. Class VIII in Assam Plains attains in Darrang the highest proportion (47 per cent) followed by Cachar (46) and Sib-sagar (44) against 30 in Nowgong. It is, as we have already seen, in Assam Hills that Class VII comes into its own with 67 per cent of the total non-agricultural population of its urban areas in this Class. The percentage is as high as 74.4 in the United K. & J. Hills and 69 in the Mishmi Hills.

**267. Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V (Production other than cultivation) :**

An examination of Subsidiary Table 5.2 shows that in Assam in Livelihood Class V—Production other than cultivation, 47 per cent of the people are non-earning dependants. In other words slightly less than half the population of this livelihood class are economically idle and inactive. The percentage of self-supporting persons in Assam Plains (47) is decidedly larger than in the Hills (42). Children and women working in the tea industry have greater scope and opportunity for becoming self-supporting persons in Plains than in the Hills. If this thesis be true, we should find the largest percentage of self-supporting persons in Lakhimpur, Sib-sagar and Darrang and the smallest in Kamrup and Goalpara where there is no tea industry.

This *a priori* conclusion is fully supported by Subsidiary Table 5.2 according to which high percentages of self-supporting persons are found in the districts of Lakhimpur (51), Sibsagar (49), Darrang (50), and low in Kamrup (31) and Goalpara (26). Table 5.8 summarises the discussion.

TABLE 5.8

*Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam ..	47	47	6
Assam Plains ..	47	47	3
Assam Hills ..	42	51	7
Manipur ..	27	44	29
Tripura ..	38	54	8

## 268. Rural-urban break-up of Livelihood Class V according to Primary Economic Status:

Table 5.9 given below gives rural/urban break-up according to the primary economic status of persons under Livelihood Class V.

TABLE 5.9

*Rural-urban break-up according to Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam :			
Rural ..	47	45	7
Urban ..	32	64	4
Assam Plains :			
Rural ..	47	46	7
Urban ..	31	65	4
Assam Hills :			
Rural ..	44	48	8
Urban ..	33	62	5
Tripura :			
Rural ..	39	52	9
Urban ..	30	69	1

Here also non-earning dependants in Assam form a considerably larger percentage in urban areas (64) than in the rural areas (46). The percentage of self-supporting persons in rural areas (47) is far greater than in the urban areas (32), for reasons we have already noted; they also explain why earning dependants in rural areas are 7 per cent against only 4 in urban areas. The Natural Divisions exemplify the same trends.

## 269. Secondary Means of Livelihood of Self-Supporting Persons of Livelihood Class V:

Subsidiary Table 5.2 gives the distribution of 10,000 persons of Livelihood Class V who have a secondary means of livelihood also. It shows that while there are about 47 per cent of the people of Livelihood Class V who are self-supporting, only 6.4 per cent have a secondary means of livelihood. Most self-supporting persons will naturally have their hands full in earning the principal means of livelihood by one of the non-agricultural occupations and cannot usually manage to engage in some other means of livelihood as well. Of this 6.4 per cent, about 4.2 per cent gets a supplementary income from the cultivation of unowned land and 1 per cent from the cultivation of their own land. The position in respect of secondary means of Livelihood is summarised in Tables 5.10 and 5.11 given below:—

TABLE 5.10

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	Self-supporting persons of Class V, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	104	419	5	12	66	16	1	17	640
Assam Plains ..	87	432	4	12	57	15	1	14	622
Assam Hills ..	588	33	22	7	323	41	1	98	1,113
Manipur ..	73	9	1	95	223	96	6	33	536
Tripura ..	112	190	16	30	56	32	3	25	464

It is clear from the Table that agriculture is of far greater importance than non-agriculture as a secondary source of income for self-supporting persons. Agriculture contains as much as 5.4 per cent out of 6.4 which is the total percentage of those self-supporting persons who have a secondary means of livelihood. Thus, out of the total number of self-supporting persons with a secondary means of livelihood seven-eighths return agriculture while the proportion falls to five-sixths in Assam Plains and six-ele-

venths in Assam Hills. \* The ratio is as high as ten-elevenths in Cachar, nine-tenths in Lakhimpur, but in Kamrup it is slightly more than one half. Under agriculture it is the cultivation of others' land as tenants which is of the great importance, with the cultivation of owned land a distant second. In Cachar, cultivation of un-owned land contains three-fourths of the total number of self-supporting persons with secondary means of livelihood whereas in Lakhimpur the proportion is nearly seven-tenths.

#### 270. Secondary Means of Livelihood of Earning Dependants of Livelihood Class V :

TABLE 5.11

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	Earning dependants of Class V, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	47	45	14	2	486	28	1	39	662
Assam Plains ..	42	47	12	2	490	27	1	37	658
Assam Hills ..	181	8	57	1	365	46	..	99	757
Manipur ..	238	26	2	18	2,278	258	37	71	2,928
Tripura ..	29	9	72	4	602	27	1	23	767

For earning dependants we see a tendency which is the reverse of that observed in the case of self-supporting persons. Here agriculture is comparatively unimportant giving employment to barely one-sixth of their number in the State and the Plains. In Assam Hills, however, agriculture has some slight importance as a secondary means of livelihood for earning dependants, whose proportion is double that of in the Plains. In Assam as well as in its Natural Divisions the earning dependants mostly fall under Livelihood Class V itself which means that in all probability they merely help in the Economic activity of the people who support them, their percentage being as high as 4.8 out of a total of 6.6 in Assam. In the Natural Divisions, it is 4.9 out of 6.6 in Assam Plains against 3.6 out of a total of 7.6 per cent of earning dependants in Assam Hills.

#### 271. Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VI (Commerce) :

The total number of persons in Livelihood Class VI, i.e., Commerce, in Assam is only 353,066, (324,708 in the Plains and 28,358

in the Hills). An analysis of their primary economic status, i.e., their distribution among the sub-classes of self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants is given below in Table 5.12.

TABLE 5.12

*Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class VI—Commerce*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam ..	30	62	8
Assam Plains ..	30	62	8
Assam Hills ..	34	50	6
Manipur ..	27	46	27
Tripura ..	31	66	3

We notice the absolute identity of the dependency pattern in Assam and Assam Plains. It, however, differs from that in Assam Hills in all respects. The number of self-supporting persons is larger in the Hills, by 4 per cent, than in the Plains, whereas those of non-earning dependants and earning dependants are

smaller by 8 and 2 per cent, respectively. As many as 62 per cent of the entire population of this class do nothing a far higher percentage than we saw in case of Livelihood Class V. Only in the case of Assam Hills, the percentage is very slightly less than that of Class V, Garo Hills (12.1), Kamrup (11.1) stand out as having the largest percentage of earning dependants. Among the autonomous districts we find that non-earning dependants in Lushai Hills contain more than seven-tenths of the entire population of the Class.

**272. Rural-urban break-up according to Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VI:**

Table 5.13 given below gives the rural and urban break-up for self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants in this Livelihood Class.

TABLE 5.13

*Rural-urban break-up according to Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam :			
Rural ..	31	60	9
Urban ..	28	68	4
Assam Plains :			
Rural ..	31	60	9
Urban ..	28	68	4

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam Hills :			
Rural ..	35	56	9
Urban ..	32	65	3
Tripura :			
Rural ..	32	64	4
Urban ..	27	72	1

There is a completely identical pattern in Assam and its Plains Division, both for the rural and urban areas; but the percentage of self-supporting persons in Assam Hills both in the rural and urban areas, is higher by 4 per cent, but that of the non-earning dependants is smaller by a similar per cent, whereas the percentage of non-earning dependants is correspondingly lower. The dependency in this Livelihood Class is very high in urban areas, where the dependants of the well-to-do traders obviously do not work.

**273. Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VI:**

Subsidiary Table 5.3 shows the distribution of the Secondary Means of Livelihood of the persons falling under 'Commerce'. Table 5.14 given below summarises the position for the State and its Natural Division in respect of the self-supporting persons only.

TABLE 5.14

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VI*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class VI, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from Livelihood Class								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
Assam ..	97	35	5	42	43	82	6	48	358
Assam Plains ..	95	34	4	43	42	84	6	46	352
Assam Hills ..	120	44	18	22	54	60	2	76	396
Manipur ..	69	10	1	192	388	60	10	56	786
Tripura ..	96	41	38	65	36	51	1	62	350

Out of over 3,010 self-supporting persons in the State per 10,000 in this Livelihood Class, only 358, i.e., 11.9 per cent of them have a secondary means of livelihood. The percentage for the Natural Divisions is about the same. Out of these 358 persons, 97 get their supplementary income from cultivation of owned land, 35 from cultivation of unowned land, 5 from

employment as agricultural labourers, 42 as agricultural rent receivers or non-cultivating owners of land, 43 from production other than cultivation, 82 from commerce, 6 from transport and 48 from other services and miscellaneous sources. These figures confirm the fact that persons engaged in Commerce are drawn from nearly all sections of the population. As so many of

them are petty traders, it is not surprising to find that a small fraction seek employment as agricultural labourers to supplement its income; evidently these petty traders are almost of the hawker type, working as agricultural labourers whenever opportunity offers. Exactly half of the total number of self-supporting persons with any secondary means of livelihood has returned agriculture as their secondary source of income. The same is true for both the Natural Divisions. Under agriculture, cultivation of owned land is by far the most important, being greater than all the other agricultural classes combined. Under non-agriculture, Commerce itself is the

most important secondary means of livelihood and equals all other non-agricultural classes combined. Class VIII is the next important class in Assam and the Plains. In the Hills, however, Class VIII is the largest secondary source of livelihood for self-supporting persons.

274. *Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VI :*

Table 5.15 given below summarises the position regarding the secondary means of livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VI for Assam and its Natural Divisions.

TABLE 5.15

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VI*

State and Natural Division	Number of earning dependants in Class VI, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
Assam ..	84	29	12	6	180	369	6	72	758
Assam Plains ..	82	29	11	6	188	377	6	70	769
Assam Hills ..	107	26	24	2	88	283	4	96	630
Manipur ..	85	20	5	8	545	1,800	129	92	2,684
Tripura ..	39	30	39	2	26	134	2	44	326

Livelihood Class VI contains 7.6 per cent of earning dependants out of whom as many as 3.69 per cent are engaged in commercial activities, indicating that they render help in the business of the people who support them; 1.8 per cent engage in production other than cultivation and 0.7 per cent in other services and miscellaneous sources. Non-agricultural occupations account for 83 per cent of the total number of earning dependants whereas agricultural occupations account for only 17 per cent. The importance of agriculture is slightly greater in the Hills, as may be expected, where it provides secondary source of livelihood to nearly one-fourth of their number. Out of all the earning dependants of Kamrup, nearly half derive their income from Production other than cultivation which is mostly weaving. Out of every 1,000, 507 are included under this category and another 424 under Commerce; together they account for

over four-fifths of the total number of earning dependants. Similar is the case in Garo Hills where out of a total number of 1,212 earning dependants, per 10,000 persons of Livelihood Class VI, as many as 749 derive their income from Commerce and 161 from Production other than cultivation.

275. *Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VII (Transport) :*

The total number of persons belonging to Livelihood Class VII (Transport) in Assam is only 115,569, (107,373 in the Plains and 8,196 only in the Hills). The reasons for such low figures, associated as they are with the system of classification adopted, have already been given in Chapter I, Section VI. An analysis according to the primary economic status of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VII (transport), i.e., their distribution into self-sup-

porting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants, is given in Table 5.16 below :—

TABLE 5.16

*Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam ..	32	65	3
Assam Plains ..	32	65	3
Assam Hills ..	35	63	2
Manipur ..	27	50	23
Tripura ..	28	69	3

In Livelihood Class VII also the percentage of dependency is very high. There are about 65 per cent of non-earning dependants and only 3 per cent earning dependants in the whole State. It will be noticed that Hills (63) have a smaller percentage of non-earning dependants in this Livelihood Class than Assam Plains (65); however, its percentage (35) of self-supporting persons is higher than what we find in its sister division (32). There is no difference whatsoever between Assam and Assam Plains in the whole pattern.

**276. Rural-urban break-up of the Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VII :**

Rural-urban break-up of the self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning

dependants in this class is given in the following table 5.17 :—

TABLE 5.17

*Rural-urban break-up of Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam :			
Rural ..	32	65	3
Urban ..	34	64	2
Assam Plains :			
Rural ..	32	65	3
Urban ..	34	64	2
Assam Hills :			
Rural ..	36	61	3
Urban ..	32	66	2
Tripura :			
Rural ..	25	69	6
Urban ..	30	69	1

The rural pattern for both Assam and its Plains is absolutely identical with that of the general population, while that in the Hills is very slightly different; nor can we find any considerable difference between the urban and rural patterns except in Assam Hills where the percentage of non-earning dependants is definitely higher than in the rural 66 as against 61, but its percentage of self-supporting persons is decidedly lower in the urban area, 32 as against 36.

**277. Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VII :**

In Livelihood Class VII (transport) there are 32.3 per cent of self-supporting persons including 1.9 per cent who have a secondary means of livelihood. Of these nearly 1 per cent get their secondary income from cultivating owned and unowned land, and the rest from various sources as contained in Table 5.18 below :—

TABLE 5.18 -

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VII*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class VII, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
Assam ..	65	28	3	33	11	18	15	17	190
Assam Plains ..	66	29	3	35	11	17	16	17	194
Assam Hills ..	57	11	5	15	10	32	5	23	158
Manipur ..	46	10	..	124	107	42	20	10	359
Tripura ..	54	3	..	48	6	24	12	30	177



Not more than 6 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VI have a secondary means of livelihood. Agriculture as a means of secondary income for the self-supporting persons of this class is twice as important as non-agriculture. The importance of Agriculture in this respect in the Hills is considerably less. Under agriculture cultivation of owned land is by far the most important, being equal to all other agricultural classes combined in Assam and both of its Natural Divisions. In the Plains as well as the State as a whole, the second largest source of subsidiary income is the receipt of rent from agricultural property.

#### 278. Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VII :

Earning dependants in Livelihood Class VII in Assam and the Plains constitute less than 3 per cent of the Class; in the Hills, the proportion, if anything, is lower, 2.3 per cent. Agriculture provides secondary income for nearly one-fourths of them in Assam as well as its Natural Divisions. The most important sources of secondary income for these earning dependants are transport, followed by production other than cultivation, other services and miscellaneous sources and commerce. Table 5.19 given below summarises the discussion :—

TABLE 5.19

#### *Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VII*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class VII, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
Assam ..	33	16	18	2	54	34	73	42	272
Assam Plains ..	33	17	19	2	56	35	72	40	274
Assam Hills ..	32	2	11	1	28	26	89	63	252
Manipur ..	16	3	..	..	1,886	176	212	39	2,332
Tripura ..	9	15	24	3	85	15	103	75	329

#### 279. Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VIII (other services and miscellaneous sources) :

This class in absolute number comes to 614,529 (509,760 in Assam Plains and 104,769 in Assam Hills). Next to 'production other than cultivation' it is the second largest among non-agricultural classes in the State and the Plains, but in the Hills it is by far the largest of all non-agricultural Classes. The primary economic status of persons belonging to Livelihood Class VIII, i.e., their distribution into the sub-classes of self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants, is summarised in Table 5.20.

TABLE 5.20

#### *Primary Economic Status of persons of Livelihood Class VIII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
Assam ..	36	57	7
Assam Plains ..	36	57	7
Assam Hills ..	42	54	4
Manipur ..	28	49	23
Tripura ..	30	67	3

The pattern for Assam and Assam Plains is identical but varies considerably in the Assam Hills. Therein we find a slightly lower proportion of earning dependants as well as non-earning dependants, while the self-supporting persons are nearly 6 per cent larger.

**280. Rural-urban break-up according to the Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VIII :**

The rural-urban break-up of self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants in this Livelihood Class is analysed in Table 5.21 given below :—

TABLE 5.21

*Rural-urban break-up according to Primary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VIII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Self-supporting persons	Non-earning dependants	Earning dependants
<b>Assam :</b>			
Rural ..	37	55	8
Urban ..	36	61	3
<b>Assam Plains :</b>			
Rural ..	35	56	9
Urban ..	36	61	3
<b>Assam Hills</b>			
Rural ..	46	48	6
Urban ..	37	60	3
<b>Tripura :</b>			
Rural ..	31	66	3
Urban ..	29	70	1

Though the rural pattern in Assam and Assam Plains Division is more or less similar, it is considerably different in the Assam Hills. The percentage of self-supporting persons and earning dependants is lower in urban areas of the State than in the rural, (that of the earning dependants being considerably so), as a result of which non-earning dependants are higher in urban areas than in the rural. We find this particularly in the Assam Hills.

In this livelihood class nearly 57 per cent of the general population are doing nothing whereas only 7 per cent are earning dependants; in the urban population of the State, however, non-earning dependants are 61 per cent and earning dependants only 3. The district of Cachar (68) has the highest percentage of non-earning dependants, against barely 50 in Lakhimpur and Darrang. In the autonomous districts, the honour as usual goes to the Lushai Hills wherein 64 per cent are non-earning dependants. The percentage of self-supporting persons is the highest in Lakhimpur (45) against Kamrup (33), which records the lowest. Kamrup is outstanding in all districts, excepting the Naga Tribal Area by returning over 11 per cent of the total population of this class as non-earning dependants against Cachar (4.5), United K. & J. Hills (3.4) and Balipara Frontier Tract (2.0).

**281. Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VIII :**

Table 5.22 below summaries the position regarding the secondary means of livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VIII given in Subsidiary Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.22

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VIII*

State and Natural Division	Number of self-supporting persons in Class VIII, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
<b>Assam</b> ..	109	35	9	53	35	33	2	77	353
<b>Assam Plains</b> ..	109	40	9	62	38	34	2	84	378
<b>Assam Hills</b> ..	108	10	10	5	21	29	1	43	227
<b>Manipur</b> ..	171	15	..	179	144	30	6	91	636
<b>Tripura</b> ..	48	14	10	70	29	41	2	97	311

Table 5.22 shows that out of 3,657 self-supporting persons, in this class, only 353, i.e., 9.4 per cent have a secondary source of income. The percentage is far lower in the Hills Division (5.4 per cent). The sources of supplementary income are spread over all the livelihood classes, the contribution from 'transport' and 'agricultural labour' being negligible. The importance of agriculture as a secondary means of livelihood for self-supporting persons of this class is evident from the fact that nearly three-fifths of such persons are included under it. The proportion in the Natural Divisions also remains the

same. Cultivation of owned land is by far the most important subsidiary source of income, containing a greater number and percentage than all other agricultural classes combined. In the Hills its predominance is even more marked; Class I being more than four times as large as all other Agricultural Classes put together. Receipt of rent from their agricultural land provides secondary income to numbers larger than any other class except Class VIII in Assam and Assam Plains. In the Hills, Class VIII comes an easy second.

## 282. Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VIII :

TABLE 5.23

*Secondary Means of Livelihood of earning dependants of Livelihood Class VIII*

State and Natural Division	Number of earning dependants in Class VIII, who derive a secondary means of livelihood from occupations in Livelihood Class								Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
Assam ..	84	27	24	5	148	33	5	339	665
Assam Plains ..	79	31	26	6	167	34	6	366	715
Assam Hills ..	103	8	13	2	57	32	2	108	425
Manipur ..	151	23	6	20	1,599	30	33	356	2,318
Tripura ..	39	8	21	4	45	27	7	119	270

Out of 6.7 per cent of the earning dependants of this class, only 1.4 per cent are engaged in agriculture whereas those under non-agricultural occupations are as high as 5.8. Thus barely 15.7 per cent of the earning dependants return one of the agricultural activities as their secondary source of income in Assam and the Plains but in the Hills their proportion is almost double viz. 30 per cent. Among agricultural classes, 'Cultivation of owned land' is by far the most important. 50 per cent of all earning dependants have returned Class VIII itself as their secondary source of income, followed by Class V which returns over 22 per cent of them. In the Hills, 'Cultivation of owned land' is of even greater importance than 'Production other than cultivation'.

## 283. Economically Inactive Persons :

As already explained in paragraph 255 ante, Livelihood Class VIII includes five categories of 'economically inactive persons'. The total number of self-supporting persons under each of these five categories in Assam and the Natural Divisions, is given in Table 5.24.

TABLE 5.24

*Self-supporting persons who are economically inactive*

State and Natural Division	Persons living purely on income from non-agricultural property	Persons living purely on Pensions, Remittances, Scholarships and Funds	Inmates of Jails, Asylums, Almshouses and Recipients of Doles	Beggars and Vagrants	All other persons living principally on income not derived from any economic activities
Assam ..	194	1,229	1,252	11,319	683
Assam Plains	158	890	1,207	11,097	683
Assam Hills	36	339	45	225	..
Manipur ..	..	7	..	..	..
Tripura ..	97	138	353	1,274	3

The numbers are insignificant for all categories except for "Beggars and Vagrants" who total as many as 11,319 in Assam. All of them, excepting 225 in the Assam Hills were counted in the Assam Plains Division. Beggars in Manipur appear to have fought shy of their profession, preferring to retain themselves under some

more 'honourable' occupation. Their complete absence under this category need not create in the mind of any one a vision of Manipur as a land flowing with milk and honey, a new El Dorado of prosperity and happiness where none is or needs be a beggar for his livelihood.

### SECTION III

#### EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND INDEPENDENT WORKERS; AND SECONDARY ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES

##### 284. Employers, employees and independent workers :

It is for the first time in 1951 that data for workers have been collected and tabulated at the Census for self supporting persons of the non-agricultural classes engaged in Industries and Services. For instructions regarding definitions of these terms, paragraph 178B ante may be referred to.

Table 5.25 given below analyses the self-supporting persons in the non-agricultural population according to their secondary economic status as employers, employees, independent workers and "Others", the last being the residuary category.

TABLE 5.25

*Secondary Economic Status of self-supporting persons of the non-agricultural classes*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF			
	Em- ployers	Em- ployees	Independent Workers	Others
Assam ..	1	75	22	2
Assam Plains	1	76	22	1
Assam Hills	2	67	30	1
Manipur ..	2	18	80	..
Tripura ..	1	48	47	4

The substantial figure of 22 per cent under independent workers is due to the fact that large numbers of persons still work as artisans particularly as handloom weavers in villages, (there being very few handloom factories in Assam), and that there are many casual workers who are not attached to any employer on a permanent or a semi-permanent basis. Employees account for exactly three-fourths of the entire number of self-supporting persons of the non-agricultural population, whereas employers form only 1 per cent as only persons with resources can afford to engage others as labourers. In Assam Plains Division, independent workers account for only 22 per cent of the non-agricultural population, while the employees account for 76 per cent of the same. This indicates the existence of fair-sized or large establishments in which the bulk of the labourers are working, and this is of course, just what one would expect in the plains where there are large tea plantations. Where there are none as in Assam Hills, the percentage of employees drops to 67 and that of the independent workers rises proportionately to 30.

A district-wise analysis of the figures confirms the above generalisation. The tea districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang return as much as 88, 88 and 79 per cent of self-supporting persons as employees against only 11, 11 & 20 respectively, as independent workers. Cachar

also shows the same phenomenon with 76 per cent of the employees and 22 per cent of independent workers. Now contrast this with non-tea districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong. The percentage of employees in these three districts is 43, 49 and 52 whereas that of independent workers is 51, 44 and 46, respectively. The contrast is patent for any one to see. In the case of the only plantation district in Madras namely the Nilgiris, we see a similar phenomenon. This district returns 1 per cent under 'employers' 92 per cent under 'employees' and 7 per cent under 'independent workers', which is due to the preponderance of the plantations and of the large number of labourers employed by them. The resemblance to the tea districts of Assam is unmistakable.

In the Hills Division, the percentage of employees varies from 49 in Garo Hills to 76 in the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills whereas that of independent workers varies from 43 in the former to 24 in the case of the latter. Garo Hills is unique among the districts in Assam to return as high as 5 per cent under 'employers' against Goalpara (3.2) and Naga Hills (3.2). The percentage in case of Lushai Hills falls to 0.3 and in the case of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills to slightly over one-tenth per cent. Most of the self-supporting enumerated under non-agricultural classes in the N. E. F. A. areas are government servants. This is the reasons for the overwhelming percentage of 96 in the Tirap Frontier Tract and 94 on the Balipara Frontier Tract; the same applies to the cent per cent (out of a total of 166 persons) of the non-agricultural classes who are returned as employees in the Naga Tribal area. The category 'others' is as a rule, larger than 'employers'; the former attains a significant percentage in Kamrup 4.5, Garo Hills 3.2 Cachar 2.9 and Goalpara 2.7. I am sure they have a lot to do with the arrival of the displaced persons still in receipt of government help while awaiting their rehabilitation. A similar percentage in Tripura confirms this impression.

#### 285. Rural-urban break-up of Secondary Economic Status of Non-Agricultural Population :

Table 5.26 gives an analysis of the self-supporting persons of the non-agricultural population for rural as well as urban areas according to their secondary economic status as

employers, employees, independent workers or 'others' i.e., the residuary category :—

TABLE 5.26

*Rural-urban break-up of Secondary Economic Status of the non-agricultural population*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF			
	Em- ployers	Em- ployees	In- dependent Workers	Others
Assam :				
Rural ..	1	78	19	2
Urban ..	3	54	42	1
Assam Plains :				
Rural ..	1	79	18	2
Urban ..	4	49	46	1
Assam Hills :				
Rural ..	2	64	33	1
Urban ..	1	73	25	1
Tripura :				
Rural ..	1	49	46	4
Urban ..	1	45	51	3

Even the slight difference between the percentages of employers in the urban areas and the rural areas is not without significance. It is just what one expects as persons with large resources who are in a position to set themselves up as employers will be found more in the urban areas than in the villages. A small magnitude of difference indicates, of course, that our urbanization and industrialisation have not gone very far. Actually, they have hardly started to move as yet. In the rural areas of the State as a whole, the ratio of independent workers to employees is nearly 1: 4, while in the urban areas of the state, it is 7:9. This is an unnatural phenomenon because in the towns the proportion of employees to independent workers is bound to be greater than in the rural areas, where people have greater opportunities of working independently, but it arises from the fact that the entire organised industry of Assam e.g. Tea, Coal Oil, are all centred in rural areas thus giving an overwhelming percentage of 78 employees to 19 independent workers. In the urban areas of Assam, independent workers constitute 42 per cent against barely 19 in the rural areas. It is only in the case of Assam Hills Division, where this vitiation due to the Tea Industry does not figure, that we get a large

percentage of independent workers in the rural areas. Let us look to the individual districts for confirmation or otherwise of this view. In the purely agricultural districts of Goalpara and Kamrup, the percentage of independent workers is definitely higher than that in the Tea districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar where independent workers are barely 10 per cent. It does not mean that the number of independent workers in the Tea districts catering to the needs of the actual population is less than found in the agricultural districts; only they are overshadowed by the overwhelmingly large numbers of tea garden labourers.

#### 286. Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V :

Table 5.27 below gives the analysis of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class V according to their secondary economic status *i.e.*, their distribution into the sub-classes of employers, employees and independent workers :—

TABLE 5.27

##### *Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Employers	Employees	Independent Workers
Assam ..	0.5	87.5	12.0
Assam Plains ..	0.4	89.0	10.6
Assam Hills ..	5.0	40.0	55.0
Manipur ..	0.1	1.3	98.6
Tripura ..	0.7	50.0	49.3

These figures disclose the existence of a large number of establishments, which employ a large labour force in Assam and the Plains Division: their comparative absence from Assam Hills is very obvious where the percentage of employers is as great as 5 against less than one half per cent in Assam Plains Division. The almost complete absence of employers class in Assam or Assam Plains Division is due to the fact that the employers are all Joint Stock Companies or Boards of Directors, whose headquarters are mostly outside Assam, in Calcutta or London. It is for this reason that the Assam

Plains Division while returning the overwhelming percentage of 90 as Employees shows under 'Employers' a figure of 0.4. Where Tea industry is most prominent *i.e.*, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang, the number of employers per 10,000, is only 1, against 95, 97 and 92 per cent of the employees, respectively. It is only when we come to the non-tea districts, of Goalpara and Kamrup that we have a sizeable figure of 3.2 and 2.8 under 'employers' with 35 and 29 under 'employees'. The percentage under independent workers in the above tea district is only 5 in Lakhimpur, 3 in Sibsagar and 8 in Darrang against 61 in Goalpara and 68 in Kamrup. The overall numbers of Livelihood Class V in the Hills districts are so small as not to exceed 3,000 in any district except the United K. and J. Hills, hence, there is no need to go into details regarding them.

#### 287. Rural-urban break-up of Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V :

This break-up is given in Subsidiary Table 5.2 in Part I-B of the Report. Table 5.28 given below summarises the position :

TABLE 5.28

##### *Rural-urban break-up of Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class V*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Employers	Employees	Independent Workers
Assam :			
Rural ..	0.4	89.3	10.3
Urban ..	4.0	38.0	58.0
Assam Plains :			
Rural ..	0.2	19.6	9.2
Urban ..	4.0	39.0	57.0
Assam Hills :			
Rural ..	5.0	42.0	53.0
Urban ..	3.0	31.0	66.0
Tripura :			
Rural ..	0.3	53.0	46.3
Urban ..	2.0	25.0	73.0

From what has been stated above, one should now naturally expect the unnatural *viz.*, a much lower percentage of independent workers in the rural areas than in the urban areas. This is particularly so in Assam and in the Plains Division, dominated, as both are by the Tea Industry. Against an average of 89 per cent of

employees, for the Plains division, that in the tea districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang is 96, 97 and 93, respectively, while their independent workers are so low as 4, 2 and 7, respectively. Contrast this position with that in some purely agricultural districts of 35 per cent employees and 61 per cent independent workers in Goalpara and 28 per cent employees and 70 per cent independent workers in Kamrup. No more striking illustration of the reversal in the roles of employees and independent works in rural areas as contrasted with the urban areas can be given.

### 288. Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VI:

Table 5.29 gives the analysis of secondary economic status of persons of Livelihood Class VI i.e., their distribution of the self-supporting persons belonging to this livelihood into three sub-classes—employers employees and independent workers.

TABLE 5.29

#### *Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VI*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Employers	Employees	Independent Workers
Assam ..	5	15	80
Assam Plains ..	5	15	80
Assam Hills ..	4	15	81
Manipur ..	..	..	100
Tripura ..	1	9	90

In Assam independent workers in commerce constitute exactly four-fifths of the total number of self-supporting persons; only 15 per cent are employees and 5 per cent employers. The pattern is identical in Assam and Assam Plains. In the Hills Division, it is slightly different. The large percentage of independent workers underlines the fact that the bulk of the persons in these three States in commerce are of the small petty type working by themselves or with the assistance of only their family members, not employing even one outsider. These figures give no indication whatsoever of the scale of business of an average trader. Compare them with Madhya Pradesh

and Madras—in Madhya Pradesh employers constitute 8 per cent against 18 per cent employees and 73 per cent independent workers; in Madras, the percentage of employers is far higher viz., 13 and that of independent workers correspondingly lower, only 64. Commercial establishments, show wide variations in the districts e.g. 14 in Garo Hills, 8 in Goalpara and 6 in Kamrup and Lakhimpur, but only 2 in Nowgong and Darrang. The number of employees under commerce is the largest in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, 20 per cent each, but in Nowgong and Goalpara it falls to 5 and 13 respectively. It appears that the Marwari shopkeeper in tea gardens catering to an established and large demand is in a position to employ outsiders while a person doing a similar business in the non-tea districts cannot on account of the low scale of his business.

### 289. Rural-urban break-up according to the Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VI:

The rural-urban break up for the figures of employers, employees and independent workers is given in Table 5.30 below.

TABLE 5.30

#### *Rural-urban break-up of Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VI*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Employers	Employees	Independent Workers
Assam			
Rural ..	4	10	86
Urban ..	7	25	68
Assam Plains			
Rural ..	4	10	86
Urban ..	7	26	67
Assam Hills			
Rural ..	5	12	83
Urban ..	3	18	79
Tripura			
Rural ..	0.5	7	92.5
Urban ..	2	14	84

Big business activities are to be found mostly in urban areas. This explains why figures in the urban areas under employers and employees are larger than those in the rural areas. Small business concerns are naturally found in rural areas and this is rightly reflected in the



rural figures of independent workers, who are as large as 86 in rural Assam against only 68 in urban Assam.

290. *Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VII:*

An analysis of the secondary economic status of persons of Livelihood Class VII, i.e., the distribution of self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VII into the sub-classes of employers, employees and independent workers is given in Table 5.31.

TABLE 5.31  
*Secondary Economic Status of  
Livelihood Class VII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Employers	Employees	Independent Workers
Assam	0.5	86	13.5
Assam Plains	0.5	86	13.5
Assam Hills	..	88	12.0
Manipur	1	91	8
Tripura	1	42	57

There is little scope for people to work as independent workers in transport except in the case of pullers of rickshaw and those few agricultural families, who make a profession of hiring out their carts. Otherwise all other persons engaged in transport are employees employed by bus companies, syndicates or Government, to work on privately organised or nationalized transport system. This explains why the percentage under employees for this class is as high 86 whereas that of independent workers just over 13. Kamrup and Nowgong are two districts which show nearly 96 and 93 per cent of self-supporting persons in transport as employees. This is due to the nationalised State Transport on their roads and the large number of railway personnel in the railway colonies of Pandu in Kamrup and Lumding in Nowgong. Cachar returns nearly one-third of the total numbers of self-supporting persons under independent workers. I am sure this has something to do with the large number of rickshaws which crowd into its urban areas making other vehicular traffic or even walking by pedestrians on the roads difficult.

291. *Rural-urban break-up of Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VII:*

Table 5.32 analyses the rural/urban break-up according to the secondary economic status of persons of Livelihood Class VII.

TABLE 5.32

*Rural-urban break-up according to the Secondary  
Economic Status of livelihood Class VII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF		
	Employers	Employees	Independent Workers
Assam	..	..	..
Rural	..	89	11
Urban	1	78	21
Assam Plains	..	..	..
Rural	..	89	11
Urban	1	77	22
Assam Hills	..	..	..
Rural	..	88	12
Urban	..	89	11
Tripura	..	..	..
Rural	2	52	46
Urban	1	35	64

The scope of setting oneself up as an independent worker for transport can be found mainly in urban areas; hence there are far larger numbers of independent workers in the urban areas of Assam than in the rural, 21 per cent against 11 per cent. This also explains why with a nil return under employers in the rural areas at least, 1 per cent occurs in the urban areas.

292. *Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VIII:*

An analysis of the secondary economic status of persons of Livelihood Class VIII (Other services and miscellaneous sources), i.e., the distribution of their self-supporting persons into employers, employees and independent worker, is given in Table 5.33 below.

TABLE 5.33  
*Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood  
Class VIII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF			
	Em- ployers	Em- ployees	In- dependent Workers	Others
Assam	1	67	25	7
Assam Plains	1	62	29	8
Assam Hills	0.5	89	9	1.5
Manipur	4.3	50.3	45.4	..
Tripura	0.5	69	21.5	9

Any persons whose means of livelihood falls in Class V, VI, or VII must necessarily be either an employer or employee or independent worker but among those who are included in

Livelihood Class VIII there may be those who are neither employers nor employees nor independent workers. Hence the residuary category 'others' referred to above. Percentages of persons who are engaged in unproductive activities and who belong to Livelihood Class VIII are given in Table 5.33. This Table shows that about 7 per cent of the self-supporting persons belong to this category in Assam. Their percentage is largest in Cachar with 12.1 followed by Kamrup (10.5) against Lakhimpur (2.8), and Nowgong (3.6). Such unproductive self-supporting persons are naturally very few in Assam Hills in which society and economic conditions allow less scope for this class to arise at all. As a result we find only 1.5 per cent under 'others' in Assam Hills against 8 in Assam Plains and 7 in the state as a whole. Under Livelihood Class VIII, employers are of some significance only in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar where they are slightly over 1 per cent. The percentage of employees is the largest in Lakhimpur (69), and the smallest in Nowgong (36). In Assam Hills, employees form nearly nine-tenths of the total number of self-supporting persons in Livelihood Class VIII. The proportion is the largest in Lushai Hills, (95 per cent), and the United K. and J. Hills district (91.2), against 75 in Naga Hills. Every one of the self-supporting persons of Livelihood Class VIII, in the Naga Tribal Area is an employee.

293. **Rural-urban break-up according to the Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VIII:**

Table 5.34 given below gives an analysis of the break-up according to the secondary economic status of Livelihood Class VIII i.e., distribution into employees, independent workers and others.

TABLE 5.34

*Rural-urban break-up according to the Secondary Economic Status of Livelihood Class VIII*

State and Natural Division	PERCENTAGE OF			
	Em- ployers	Em- ployees	Independent Workers	Others
Assam :				
Rural ..	1	66	25	8
Urban ..	1	71	26	2
Assam Plains :				
Rural ..	1	62	28	9
Urban ..	2	61	34	3
Assam Hills :				
Rural ..	1	87	11	1
Urban ..	..	92	6	2
Tripura :				
Rural ..	1	69	21	9
Urban ..	.	70	23	7

In Assam Plains, the number of independent workers is small in the rural areas than in urban areas; in Assam Hills, however, the tendency is the other way round, showing 11 per cent independent works in rural areas against only 6 in the urban.

## SECTION IV

## DIVISION O

## PRIMARY INDUSTRIES OTHER THAN CULTIVATION, MINING AND QUARRYING

294. **Introductory :**

The total number of self-supporting persons in Division O in Assam is 534,621 (315,556 males and 219,065 females) or nearly 55 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons in all industries and services in the State is in this Division.

This Division contains :

Group Code No.	Industry	Persons
0.1	Stock raising	4,698
0.2	Rearing of small animals and insects	4,469
0.3	Plantation Industries	512,663
0.4	Forestry and wood cutting	2,767
0.5	Hunting	153
0.6	Fishing	9,869

Subsidiary Table 5.8 deals with this group of industries and shows that of the self-supporting people engaged in industries of Division O, nearly 96 per cent are included under Sub-Division 0.3 i.e., they are engaged in plantation industries only. There cannot be any doubt therefore, regarding the overwhelming importance of plantations, among primary industries, the latter again in Assam mean simply the Tea Industry and nothing more. About one per cent are engaged in stock raising and one in the rearing of small animals and insects; nearly 2 per cent are shown under fishing. The District Index of Non-Agricultural Occupations given in Part I-B of the Report shows the actual number of self-supporting persons engaged in different occupations.

#### 295. Stock raising :

The total number is 4,698 (4,265 males and 433 females). It is distributed in all districts, but principally in Darrang and United K. & J. Hills. The latter district has the largest number 1,526 under this group. Little reliance can, however, be placed on these figures as the keeping and breeding of cattle is closely bound up with ordinary cultivation and many of the professional graziers i.e. the Nepalis have their own cultivation in or near the grazing grounds. According to the census of livestock taken in May, 1951, there were 8,727,499 animals in Assam\*, of which 5,145,576 were cattle, 475,231 were buffaloes and the rest 917,239 were mostly goats. In Assam Plains alone the total number of animals was 7,805,558 out of which 4,921,997 were cattle, 444,354 buffaloes and 853,370 goats. The cattle of the plains of Assam are a miserable race, ill-nourished and ill-bred, the average daily yield of milk being between a quarter and a half seer per day. Born and brought up in Gujarat which is not particularly famous for its very good breed of cattle, I recall having mistaken the cattle of Assam in the fields for large-sized goats from a running train, when I first came to Assam. One of the principal causes of this extremely unsatisfactory milk yield is the unduly large number of cattle, and their conse-

quent poor feeding. Describing the evil effects of large number of cattle, Radhakamal Mukerjee says, "But the improvement and cultivation of fodder crops will be futile, if not actually harmful, if the peasants continue their present attitude towards the maintenance of uneconomical and useless cattle, which represents the staggering figure of 125 million heads\*. It is only a planned programme of restriction of cattle numbers and of controlled breeding which can facilitate the introduction of dairy farming and an intensive system of mixed farming combined with dairying (such as is prevalent in the Punjab, the Western U.P. and Gujarat) throughout the country. But social sentiments die hard in India, and for several decades the excessive burden of worthless, superfluous beasts will aggravate the poverty of small-holders and the exhaustion of soil and grass-land resources\*\*". Further analysing the causes of low milk yield and lack of vigour in the animals, he points out, "Forests, meadows and marshes, all are now invaded by the plough due to population increase, which also leads to the scarcity of fodder and grazing grounds. The population of grazing animals comprises about 500 per square mile, considerable numbers of which are inefficient and worn out cattle but are maintained in compliance with Hindu religious sentiment. A chronic fodder deficiency is responsible for both lack of vigour of the ox and low milk yield of the cow which have such unfavourable reactions on farming efficiency"†.

In the face of the chronic fodder deficiency the slaughter of useless animals is a kindness, almost a deliverance, from the state of perpetual semi-starvation, to the dumb creatures. Regarding the ways and means of increasing our milk production, Baljit Singh says, "According to Dr. Burns, it is possible to increase milk yield to the extent of 75 per cent in the case of cows, 60 per cent for buffaloes and 50 per cent for goats. A larger part of it can be realized simply by improved feeding and better management, and therefore, without much loss of time. In fact, the milk yield of the village cattle can be improved to the extent of 50 to 60 per cent, if the fodder and concentrates are given in adequate quantities. If the average yield of cereals per

\* This does not include cattle in Naga Hills and the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, where no cattle census was held. There are 386,143 cattle in the United K. & J. Hills District, including the portion which is now in the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills.

\* 'Food Planning for Four Hundred Millions', by Radhakamal Mukerjee, page xi of Preface (Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1938).

† Ibid, page 8.

acre is increased, as it ought to be, there will be considerable area for the cultivation of pulses, oil-seeds and fodder, in quantities sufficient for the production of enough food for men and feeding stuffs for the dairy cow and buffalo. Feeding can also be improved by eliminating the unfit cows, bullocks and buffaloes. With a proper organisation of agriculture no less than half the present number of dry animals will become redundant and their elimination will help further in improving the feeding and milching efficiency of dairy cows in India. In Europe including Russia five times as much milk is produced as in India with an equal number of milch cattle. It may be very ambitious to strive for a similar efficiency but an objective of doubling the present output in the near future should in no case be regarded as too high. Such a target should rather be regarded as within easy reach and one of the cardinal features of the country's agricultural and food policy.\*

Stock raising plays an important part in Assam Hills Division in which as many as 17.4 per cent of self-supporting persons of Division O are included in Sub-Division O.2. This is particularly so in the Garo Hills (25 per cent), and the United K. and J. Hills, (22 per cent). The number of self-supporting persons who are breeders and keepers of cattle and buffaloes is 1,938, while those who breed and keep other large animals e.g. elephants number only 27 in the whole State.

#### 296. Rearing of small animals and insects :

The total number of persons engaged in the rearing of small animals and insects in Assam is 4,469 (3,054 males and 1,415 females). They are mostly confined to the districts of Darrang (2,679) and Nowgong (1,438). This class is small but of great interest, since it includes the rearers of silk-worms. Shillong is famous for the honey produced by bees which feed on orange plants. Many Assam household rearers depend on *eri* or *muga* as well as *pat* worm rearing. In most cases, doubtless the occupation is subsidiary to one of the textiles groups or to cultivation, while admission of breeding the *pat* worm is shunned as it is sometimes regarded as degrading. Steps are now being taken by the Cottage Industries Department of the Government of Assam to encourage the rearing of mulberry trees for silk worms as well as the indigenous production and

weaving of *muga* and *pat* worms. *Muga* silk of Assam with its bright golden colour and lasting quality is particularly appreciated by the upper classes, only its high price prevents it from being used as a material for daily-wear garments.

Nowhere do we find poultry-keeping as an important industry, the total number in Assam being 370 only. Villagers do keep a few fowls, especially Mus'lim immigrant villagers, who prefer to sell the eggs to nearby towns than to supplement their scanty and ill-balanced diet.

For a state famous for its forests all over the country, the people of Assam have not yet taken to lac culture which can form a very good occupation for the people living in the neighbourhood of the forest. Little skill is required for this job. The villagers themselves can work the collected lac into shellac in their own cottages. The equipment that is needed is very simple and can easily be made by the villagers themselves. Before it can reach down to the villagers, the industry will require a considerable amount of organisation and help from Government. India holds a very prominent place in the supply of lac and Assam has great possibilities which have not yet been adequately tackled. It promises to provide subsidiary employment to our under-employed agriculturists if the industry were properly developed.

#### 297. Plantation Industries—Tea :

There being no coffee and rubber plantations in Assam, plantation industries mean practically tea and nothing else. The total number of self-supporting persons in Assam is 512,563 (296,262 males and 216,401 females) out of whom only 7,471 are in the Assam Hills Division. The total number under 'Plantation Industries' in each Plains district of Assam, as given below, is a very good indication of its importance from the point of view of the Tea Industry.

TABLE 5.35

*Number of self-supporting persons engaged in Plantation Industries and their percentage to the total number of self-supporting persons in Division O, in the districts of Assam Plains Division*

District	Persons	% of Division O
1. Cachar	86,737	97.4
2. Goalpara	4,281	51.5
3. Kamrup	2,855	43.2
4. Darrang	77,726	94.2
5. Nowgong	11,921	85.7
6. Sibsagar	150,134	99.3
7. Lakhimpur	171,537	99.4

\* Population and Food Planning by Baljit Singh.

We can straightway see how Lakhimpur, Sib-sagar, Cachar and Darrang are the four chief tea districts of Assam. Nowgong has a few tea gardens which accounts for the small number of persons under this category, whereas the numbers in Goalpara and Kamrup are negligible as compared to the figures for the principal tea districts.

As my predecessor Mullan nicely put it, "Tea is the only thing for which Assam is known in most parts of the world. In fact, instead of the coat of arms of a Rhinoceros sable on a ground of a gold, a tea bush *verdant* supported by a planter *rampant* and a cooly *dormant* would have been a far more appropriate emblem for Assam". There is no doubt that the transient prominence before the world, recently acquired by Assam by its series of natural calamities beginning from the great Assam earth quake of August 1950,\* will soon fade, but it will continue to be famous for its tea, which is now more prominent than even in the public eye as one of its principal earners of foreign exchange.

#### 297A. The importance of tea in India's economy\*

##### (i) Capital employed :

The tea industry now constitutes one of India's major industries, producing nearly 600 million lbs. of tea a year and contributing largely to Central and State revenues as an earner of over Rs. 70 crores worth of foreign exchange and an employer of over a million workers, the industry has assumed a position of vital importance to India's economy. Internal consumption of tea in India is about 25% of the country's total production and the remaining 75% is available for export to both soft and hard currency areas. With over 75% of undivided India's production of raw jute being confined to Eastern Pakistan and the best quality of cotton being grown in Western Pakistan, tea now constitutes the most important item in India's export trade.

According to official statistics about 545 Joint Stock Companies were engaged in the Tea Industry during 1945-46 with a paid-up capital of Rs. 50,65,19,477 (£37,988,960) of the total Joint Stock Companies, about 476 were incorporated in India with a paid-up capital of Rs. 15,06,91,304

and the remaining 169 Companies were incorporated in the U. K. and elsewhere with a paid-up capital of £26,637,113. Latter all-India statistics about the total number of Joint Stock Companies engaged in the Tea Industry in India are not available, but data on foreign companies collected from the Registrars of Joint Stock Companies in the various States in which tea is grown indicate that about 178 Sterling Companies, *i.e.*, Companies incorporated in U. K. and elsewhere with a paid-up capital of £27,854,384 are now engaged in the Tea Industry having their principal place of business in India.

The following table shows the number of Sterling Companies engaged in the Tea Industry which have their principal place of business in India, with their paid-up capital :—

TABLE 5.35A

#### Number and Capital of Tea Companies (Sterling)

Principal place of business.	No. of Sterling Companies engaged.	Paid-up Capital.
West Bengal	153	£24,145,835
Assam	12	£ 2,372,511
Madras	3	£ 769,619
Mysore	4	£ 489,948
Travancore	6	£ 76,471
Total	178	£27,854,384

Besides investment by Joint Stock Companies, a large number of private owners are also engaged in the Tea Industry. It is, however, not possible to estimate the capital invested in private enterprise. Accurate data relating to the proportion of Indian and foreign capital invested in the Industry are also not available.

##### (ii) Sources of Revenue to the Centre and States :

**Export duty :** An export duty on tea at the rate of annas 2 per lb. was introduced in February 1947; it was increased in the same year to annas 4 per lb. Taking India's average exports of tea in recent years at 400 million lbs. per annum, the Government of India derives approximately Rs. 10 crores a year by way of Export duty on tea. In 1948-49 India's total exports amounted to about 410 million lbs. contributing a sum of Rs. 10.3 crores approximately to Central Revenue. The following table shows the amount of Export Duty collected on tea at the ports within the jurisdiction of the Collectors

\* Chapter II from the Report of the *ad-hoc* Tea Committee is reproduced here as it will interest the general readers.

of Import and Export Duties of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras since 1946-47 :—

TABLE 5.35B  
*Export Duty collected on Tea*

Port	1946-47*	1947-48*	1948-49	1949-50 (upto Dec. 1949)
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Calcutta	67,56,163	8,12,09,326	9,26,27,970	8,00,00,000(a)
Madras	14,44,738	1,40,96,588	99,08,574	73,19,967
Bombay	3,72,518	13,06,265	13,33,778	1,88,313
Total	85,73,419	9,66,12,179	10,38,70,322	8,75,08,280
	(a) Unadjusted			

**Excise Duty:** In April, 1944, the Government of India imposed an Excise Duty of Annas 2 per lb. on all tea manufactured but not exported and collected at source by the Central Excise Authorities. This duty was increased to Annas 3 per lb. in March, 1948, of which 158 million lbs. retained for internal consumption was subject to Excise Duty realising approximately Rs. 2.96 crores.

**Import Duty on Tea Chests:** The following table shows the amount of Import Duty collected on tea chests at the ports of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras since 1946-47 :—

TABLE 5.35C  
*Import Duty collected on Tea Chests*

	1946-47	1947-48†	1948-49	1949-50 (upto Dec. 1949)
	(Rupees)			
Calcutta	34,59,246	24,99,935	37,70,974	5,77,586
Madras	6,15,747	5,93,273	4,81,800	1,03,307
Bombay	10			
Total	40,75,003	30,93,208	42,52,774	6,80,893

**Income-Tax and Agricultural Income-Tax:** The annual estimated profit of the tea industry is Rs. 14 crores. The taxable income of this profit is 40 per cent of Rs. 5.6 crores. The Income-tax and Super-tax that goes to the Central Exchequer is estimated to be 2½ crores. As a result of a recent decision, the dividend income derived by shareholders of Joint Stock Tea Companies is

\*The amount of Export Duty collected in Chittagong during these periods was Rs. 9,80,002 in 1946-47 and Rs. 28,98,258 in 1947-48.

† The amount of duty collected at Chittagong during that year was Rs. 66,265.

subject to Central tax on the full 100 per cent in the hands of shareholders, thus 60 per cent of the dividends paid to shareholders suffers taxation i.e., both State Agricultural Income-tax and Central Income-tax (see next paragraph). On this basis the additional income accruing to the Indian Exchequer must amount to a further ½ crore rupees at least.

Most of the States in India growing tea have introduced Agricultural Income-Tax. Leaving 40 per cent of the profit to be taxed by the Central Government the remaining 60 per cent or an estimated amount of Rs. 8.4 crores is subject to taxes by the States.

**Other Taxes:** The conditions of holding and rate of revenue payable on tea garden holdings vary in different States. The total area of lands in the occupation of the Tea Planters including 8,47,000 acres actually under tea, comes to 26,40,000 acres. On the basis of minimum rent of Re. 1 per acre, the land revenue paid by the Tea Estates in India is estimated to be Rs. 26½ lakhs.

The local cess is variable but it may amount to anything between Rs. 2 to 5 lakhs.

The River Steamer Companies' and the State Railways' earnings on carrying of tea to the marketing centre is estimated to be about Rs. 2½ crores. They receive an amount almost as large from the Tea Estates on account of freight on incoming goods, such as coal stores, machinery, implements and foodstuffs.

The Tea Industry is also a direct and indirect taxpayer in various other ways, such as, Sales Taxes, Duty on petrol and petroleum products, Excise Duties and Import Duty on garden stores, machinery and equipment.

### (iii) Earner of Foreign Exchange :

Total exports of Tea from India by land and sea in recent years have averaged about 400 million lbs. per year, contributing in 1949 over Rs. 70 crores to the country's total annual earnings of foreign exchange, including Rs. 11 crores of "hard" currency.

### (iv) Employer of Labour (Resident, temporary and seasonal) :

The Indian Tea Industry gives employment to more than a million workers and represents a capital investment of about Rs. 50 crores. Unlike other organised industries, an important feature of the plantation industry is that it em-

employs a large number of women and juvenile labour, as recruitment is on a family basis, and as the work is of an agricultural nature. According to data furnished by Dr. D. V. Rege in his report on Conditions of Labour in Plantations in India, over 40 per cent of the workers engaged in the Tea Industry are women. More juveniles are employed in the gardens in North-East India than in the South. At a Conference of the Industrial Committee on Plantations held in New Delhi in March, 1948, it was agreed that no person under 12 years of age should be employed in tea gardens or in factory. This decision has been implemented by the Employers' Associations in both North and South India.

Most of the labour employed in the Tea Industry is resident on the tea estates and is generally recruited on a permanent basis. The proportion of temporary labour is very small. In 1942 the percentage of Basti or Faltu labourers (casual workers) employed in the tea gardens in Assam was only 5, but the percentage increased to about 10 by 1947. In 1944 the percentage of basti labour employed daily in the Dooars was less than 3, in Darjeeling less than 1, while it was nearly 12 per cent in Terai. The estates in South India too do not generally employ much local and casual labour because tea areas are mostly remote from villages. Outside labourers in Assam are mostly dependants ex-garden workers who have purchased land and settled outside the garden limits. Local labour employed in the Assam gardens is usually less than 5 per cent.

The following table shows the different categories of labour employed in the tea estates in 1942 :—

TABLE 5.35D

*Average daily number employed in the Gardens in 1942*

	Garden labour (per- manent)	Outside labour (per- manent)	Outside labour (tem- porary)	Total
Assam	464,168	31,746	25,753	521,667
Bengal (undivided)	217,350	5,483	9,263	232,096
South India	141,749	5,414	7,352	154,515
Minor Producing Areas	4,986	4,461	8,736	18,183
Total	828,253	47,104	51,104	926,461

Source : Indian Tea Statistics, 1942.

Although later all-India figures are not available, it is believed that nearly a million and a quarter workers are now employed in the Tea Industry. The table below shows the position of employment in the Industry since 1924 :—

TABLE 5.35E

*Employment in Tea Industry 1924-47*

Year	No. of workers employed (All India)
1924	811,540
1929	930,472
1932	859,713
1935	899,039
1939	925,237
1942	926,461
1944	1,003,840
1947	1,250,000 (estimated)

#### 297B. The Tea Industry and Labour in Assam :

In Chapter I of this Report, I have discussed at some length the question of Tea garden labour immigration. The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour (1927), the Report of an enquiry into the conditions of Tea gardens labour by Shri R. Rege, I.C.S., Labour Commissioner, Govt. of India, published in 1941, coupled with Shri Deshpande's brochure on the cost of living in Assam Tea Plantations, give a very good idea of the conditions under which the Tea garden labourers live and work. Therefore, there is no need for me to dilate on the subject here.

The following is a brief note on "the Tea Industry and Labour in Assam kindly contributed by Shri H. P. Duara, B.Com., (Leeds), Labour Commissioner, Assam. It will definitely interest the reader in view of the various Governmental activities and measures to which it draws attention.

"The tea industry is by far the most important industry in the State of Assam. The name of Major Robert Bruce is associated with the early discovery of tea in this country who in 1823 found indigenous tea growing in Assam. Shortly after this cultivation of tea on a commercial scale began in Assam, by 1859, there were more than 50 companies engaged in tea production in the State. Since then big strides have been made in the production of tea and



today Assam produces nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  (three quarters) of the total produce of tea in North India. Tea now is a major commodity of export and ranks highest among the dollar earning commodities of this country.

The tea industry in Assam employs nearly a million souls scattered over a wide area of the State spreading from the heart of the State and extending as far as the foot of the Bhutan Hills in the north, the Burmese frontier in the east and East Pakistan border in the south. There are at present nearly 1,000 tea estates and 5,721 acres of the State are under field crop cultivated by companies. The tea labour comprises nearly  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the total population of Assam and plays a very important role in the industrial harmony and peace of the State.

Gardually the labour in this province, as in other provinces, became increasingly conscious of its interest. A number of trade unions grew up. A few trade disputes also took place. Government found themselves handicapped by the absence of a machinery by which reliable and full facts regarding condition of labour can be collected, compiled and analysed. It was therefore decided to establish an office of the Labour Commissioner in this State. It was started with one part-time Labour Commissioner and one Assistant Labour Commissioner with a skeleton staff in November, 1941 and it continued to function as such till 1947 when a full time Labour Commissioner was appointed and the staff was enlarged.

In 1947, two officers of the Assam Civil Service were sent to England for necessary training on labour matters and on their return were appointed Labour Officers with separate offices at Dibrugarh and Gauhati. Since then the staff of the Labour Department has been increased considerably and today the Labour Department in Assam consist of :—

- 1 Labour Commissioner;
- 1 Asst. Labour Commissioner;
- 5 Labour Officers;
- 11 Labour Inspectors;
- 3 Labour Investigators.

With the coming of the Congress Government into power several beneficent labour laws were enacted with a view to improve the condition of plantation labour and extended to all

tea estates. The Labour Acts applicable to plantation labour in the State area :—

1. Factories Act 1948;
2. Industrial Employment Standing Orders Act 1946;
3. Payment of Wages Act 1936;
4. Minimum Wages Act 1948;
5. Industrial Dispute Act 1947;
6. Indian Trade Unions Act 1926;
7. Assam Maternity Benefit Act 1944.

These Acts are being administered and enforced through the Labour Department. The individual tea estates are visited regularly by inspecting staff to ensure proper implementation of these Acts.

During last four years, several important biparties agreements between labour and industry were also effected in respect of such matters as Housing, Education, Medical facilities, Welfare, Ration issues, Food concession, etc., through Tripartite Conferences arranged by the Labour Department.

The total numbers of tripartite conferences held are as under :—

Year	Tripartite Conferences
1948	2
1949	3
1950	5
1951	4
1952	1
Total	15

The welfare of labour is also receiving attention of Government. Recently the State Government have sanctioned a considerable sum for the inauguration of a scheme for the welfare of the plantation labour with a view to bringing about an all-round improvement in the standard of living of labourers. The scheme envisages opening of a net work of welfare centres in the tea garden areas. These centres will be in charge of persons trained in welfare work who will work among the labourers, and centres will be utilised for the benefit of all workers where there will be facilities for meetings, lectures, games, dramatic performances, folk dance and other healthy recreational activities. Regular classes will also be held in these centres and illiterate workers will be taught how to read and write.

Under this scheme separate welfare centres are proposed to be opened for male workers, female workers and ex-garden labourers. In these welfare centres the female workers will also be given facilities to learn spinning, weaving, knitting, etc., and ex-garden labourers will be given training in vocational subjects such as tailoring, carpentry, etc.

To give effect to the scheme of training of social workers is necessary. A labour welfare training centre for the male workers was started some years ago by one of the voluntary welfare organization at Rowrian (Jorhat), which was later on subsidised by the State Government. This training centre is now being utilised for training suitable candidates in labour welfare work. A qualified principal and two lecturers have since been appointed for this training centre. A Managing Committee consisting of representatives of industry and labour and prominent citizens of the town with Labour Commissioner, Assam, as the President, manages the affairs of the Institute.

A training centre for female social workers is also going to be opened in a tea garden. A site has already been selected and work in respect of construction of building, etc., will shortly be undertaken. Suitable candidates selected and trained at these training centres, after completion of their training, will be attached to different welfare centres located in the garden.

To guide, supervise and coordinate the activities of the different organization which have been entrusted with the operation of the labour welfare scheme, a Labour Welfare Board has been constituted with the Hon'ble Minister, Labour as the Chairman and the Labour Commissioner, Assam, as the Secretary.

Under the five-year plan the State Government, however, propose to have a more extended scheme for labour welfare. The scheme will involve the establishment of a welfare section under the Labour Deptt. with three labour welfare officers and a medical corps with qualified doctors and necessary staff. The equipment will include a mobile dispensary and a radio and cinema set with necessary personnel and motor vans. Under this scheme welfare centres for industrial workers other than plantation labour will also be opened.

Further, the Housing Board of the State laid down the minimum standard for the houses in plantation. The Housing Scheme submitted by industry as per recommendation of the Board has received the approval of both the Government of India and the State Government. The Indian Tea Association has already constructed as many as 10,000 houses as per above scheme upto the end of last year.

The industry in Assam has voluntarily undertaken welfare measure in respect of medical facilities. Free medical aid is given to the workers by the garden authority but the standard of medical facilities is not uniform and it varies from the provision of few common drugs dispensed by a compounder to hospitalisation and specialist's attention. The question of laying down a minimum standard of medical facilities in the garden is now receiving the attention of the State Government.

The subject of education is also receiving the attention of the State Government. Primary schools are at present being run in many gardens at the cost of the employers.

The State which is pledged to the raising of the standard of living to the people cannot remain indifferent to the labourers' dream for a living wage. With a view to the realisation of the above aim the State Government have set up a Minimum Wages Committee under the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for fixing the minimum wage in plantation consisting of 15 members, 5 representing labour, 5 employers and 5 independent members which held one meeting in 1950 and four in 1951. As per recommendation of this committee Government have fixed the minimum wage in plantation with effect from 30th March 1953.

The State Government had also been quick enough to realise the importance of trade union movements and accordingly fostered the growth of trade unionism in plantation. The I. N. T. U. C. which is the most important labour organization working in the State, has formed trade unions on plantation covering large areas.

There is still a lot more to be done towards amelioration of the conditions of the labourers in plantation. These things, however, take time and cannot be achieved overnight. It is at least gratifying to note that the foundation of such measures has already been laid."

### 297C. Fortunes of the Industry in the Past Decade :

Tea is one of the considerable crops of India, the chief tea growing tracts in the country being Assam, West Bengal, Madras, Coorg, states of Tripura, Travancore, Mysore and Cochin. The annual output approximately is 600 million lbs. cultivated in an area of about 8.5 lacs of acres. The estimated consumption of tea in India is about 150 million lbs. per annum. The best tea drinkers in the world are the British. In Britain, the per capita consumption of tea is as high as 9 lbs. Countries which stand next to Britain as the heaviest tea drinkers are Australia (6.6 lbs. per head) and New Zealand (7.5 lbs. per head). The following figures give some idea of world consumption of tea in terms of million lbs. as well as per capita consumption in 1934-38 and 1947-50 :—

TABLE 5.35F

*Consumption of tea in some countries of the world (million lbs.) and per capita*

	1934-38	1947-50	Per capita consumption	
			(lbs.)	(lbs.)
United Kingdom	435.3	400.2	9.2	8.0
Republic of Ireland	22.8	23.7	7.7	7.9
United States of America	83.2	89.2	0.65	0.60
Canada	39.2	45.3	3.5	3.4
Australia	46.01	51.1	6.8	6.5
New Zealand	10.5	13.9	6.7	7.5
Egypt	15.1	32.0	0.97	1.6
Union of South Africa	13.8	19.8	1.4	1.7
Southern Rhodesia	0.6	1.7	0.44	0.85
Nyasaland	Not available	0.1	.	0.07
Northern Rhodesia	0.1	0.3	0.08	0.19
West Africa	0.2	0.5	0.01	0.02
Netherlands	23.1	15.3	2.7	1.5
Switzerland	1.7	2.0	0.41	0.45
Denmark	1.2	1.8	0.34	0.43

During the war years, the tea industry had a very smooth running when production was easily adjusted to demand and prices fully assured. Most of other sources of supply viz. China, Japan, the Netherland East Indies and Formosa were wholly involved in the war, which put the main burden of supply on India and ensured a period of prosperity for the Indian Tea Industry including that in Assam. By partition, however, India lost an output of about 45 million lbs; but

by 1949 she not only made up the loss but also increased her production by an extra 2 million lbs.

During all this period, there was a scheme of International Tea Regulation, which had its origin in the alternating periods of exaggerated prosperity in acute depression which followed world war I. The first International Tea Agreement was signed in 1933 which also sought the formation of an International Tea Committee to operate and demonstrate the Tea Control Scheme. The basic object of the scheme was the maintenance of equilibrium between supply and demand and the main provisions of the first International Tea Agreement were those regulating the export of tea from and the planting of tea in the three participating countries viz., India, Ceylon and the Netherland East Indies. A standard export figure, based on the maximum exports in any one of the three years 1929, 1930 or 1931, was allotted to each country, and the International Tea Committee then determined the percentage of this standard figure each country should be allowed to export, the figure in the first year being 85 per cent. With regard to new planting, the Agreement stipulated that existing tea areas must not be extended during the period of five years except in special cases where the existence of an estate would otherwise be imperilled, and it was laid down that in no circumstances should any such extensions and new plantings exceed one half of one per cent of the total planted tea area of each territory at the commencement of the Scheme.

The strength of the Tea Regulation Scheme lay in the fact that it was initiated by the producers so that the principles of control were determined by the industry itself. Governmental assistance was, however, clearly necessary for the successful operation of the scheme, involving as it did the regulation of exports, and the legislation necessary to implement the terms of the International Tea Agreement was passed by the Governments of the three countries with retrospective effect to the 1st April, 1933. In India, this legislation was contained in the Indian Tea Control Act which provided for the setting up of a body known as the Indian Tea Licensing Committee, to exercise control over the export of tea from, and the planting of tea in India, in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Licensing Committee originally consisted entirely of representatives of tea producers in India, but

in 1939 provision was made for an official, appointed by the Government of India, to be Chairman of the Committee. The Act prescribed that the Committee should hold two statutory meetings each year, but the day to day administration of the Act was carried out by two Joint Controllers, one in North India and one in South India, working under the general directions of the North India Committee and the South India Committee respectively. During the currency of the first International Tea Agreement, consideration was given to its continuance after the 31st March, 1938. The second International Tea Agreement to last for another five years from the 1st April, 1938 to 31st March, 1943 was signed on the 18th November, 1936. Before this second International Tea Agreement was due to expire, the Japanese had overrun Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies and tea exports from Java and Sumatra had ceased. This brought about a world shortage of tea, and in an endeavour to meet the situation the International Tea Committee increased the figure of regulation for the other exporting countries to 125 per cent. As the war prevented any consideration being given to a new Agreement, it was decided that the Tea Regulation Scheme should be continued in its existing form for the duration of hostilities and for two clear quota years thereafter, and the second period of regulation therefore, expired on the 31st March, 1948. Malaya did not rejoin the scheme after the war, and the three African territories, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, withdrew from it as from the 31st March, 1947.

In view of the likely adoption of a charter for the International Trade Organization, an Interim Producers' Agreement was entered into for 2 years from the 1st April, 1948 or for such period as might be necessitated by the coming into force of that charter. This interim agreement continued to provide for the regulation of exports on the basis of standard exports which were as follows :—

India	348.2	million lbs.	
Pakistan	35.0	"	"
Ceylon	251.6	"	"
Indonesia	173.6	"	"
<b>Total</b>	<b>808.4</b>	<b>"</b>	<b>"</b>

The percentage of regulation for the period of the new Agreement was 125 per cent this figure having been fixed so as to ensure the maintenance of unrestricted production. Provision was

made in the Interim Agreement for an extension of the area under tea in each of the producing countries by 4 per cent over the total permissible area as on the 31st March, 1948, whilst replacements have been allowed upto 5 per cent of the permissible acreage in each year, such replacements to be accompanied by simultaneous uprooting of a corresponding area of old tea. The permissible acreage as at 31st March 1948, were :—

India	775,700	acres.
Pakistan	76,700	"
Ceylon	565,603	"
Indonesia	519,012	"
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,937,015</b>	<b>"</b>

In other respects the Interim Agreement followed the provisions of the earlier Agreement and continued the ban on the exports of the tea seeds to non-participating countries. The Agreement came into operation on the 1st April, 1948, and was signed by India, Ceylon, Indonesia and Pakistan. The Indian Export allotment for 1948-49 was fixed by the Government of India at 435 million pounds, the maximum permissible under the Interim Agreement in order to facilitate the export of tea to the maximum extent.

It is generally recognised that the International Tea Regulation Scheme has served the Industry well and that in fact, it saved the industry from disaster during and after the slump of the early thirties. It is definitely an event of major importance in the history of the Tea Industry.

On the expiry of the last Interim Agreement on the 31st March, 1950, the International Tea Agreement has, therefore, been renewed for a further period of 5 years and provision has been made for extensions to be allowed upto 5 per cent of the permissible acreage under tea as on the 31st March, 1950, and replacements to be permitted upto 10 per cent on the same date. The permissible acreages as on the 31st March 1950, are as follows :—

India	806,728	acres.
Pakistan	79,769	"
Ceylon	588,227	"
Indonesia	539,772	"
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,014,496</b>	<b>"</b>

The degree of regulation of exports fixed by the International Tea Committee has also been increased from 125 per cent to 130 per cent of the standard exports for the first year, the exports figures for subsequent years being fixed after consultation with the producing countries. On this basis, the Indian exports allotment for the current year has been fixed by the Government of India at 452 million lbs.

Rapid developments ensued after the war period e.g., the founding of the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board, the recent taking over of its functions by the Central Tea Board, the system of bulk purchase and control involved in second world war and thereafter, the result of the partition of India, and the decline of exports to hard currency areas in 1948 as well as the effects of devaluation on the trade. This latter development particularly affected the tea industry in Cachar.

#### 297D. Tea Industry in Cachar :

Early in 1948, it became apparent that many tea companies with interests in Cachar had suffered severe losses on their working during the year 1947. Their position was made the more critical in that in March 1948 a Tripartite Conference of Government, Employers' and Labour representatives, called by the Government of India, raised the dearness allowance for tea garden labour in Cachar from 2 annas to 5 annas per day, while continuing the practice of the management selling foodstuffs to labour at prewar concessional prices, which were held at that level although their cost in the market continued to rise. In May 1948, the Indian Tea Association appointed a Sub-Committee to investigate the conditions of tea estates in Cachar and suggest remedies. In May, 1949, the Indian Tea Association addressed the Government of Assam and the Government of India, stating the fact of the losses sustained by many companies in Cachar and the reasons they felt underlay them, and announcing their intention of recommending an increase in the prices at which concessional foodstuffs were sold to Labour, an intention which was also communicated to the Labour Unions. Both Government and Labour asked for a Tripartite discussion before such measures were put into force and a Conference was accordingly held in Delhi in September, 1949.

This Conference failed to achieve any agreement between Employers and Labour, and as the employing interests felt that they could not await the decision of any tribunal or Court of Enquiry that the Government might set up, they announced their intention of advising their member gardens in Cachar to sell rationed foodstuffs to labour in future only at landed cost price, and in lieu of the previous concessional price to grant an allowance of 4 annas per adult worker per day worked and 2 annas per child, at the same time increasing the dearness allowance by half an anna. Another Conference was, however, summoned by the Government of Assam at Silchar in October, 1949, and there it was eventually agreed by all parties that conversion of food concessions into cash at 4 annas 6 pies per day should be introduced on 16 gardens only, which had made losses for two years in succession, and that the remainder should continue to issue food concessions as before. To these sixteen gardens, four others were subsequently added and one was removed, making the complete list as follows :—

Arcuttipore.  
Binnakandy.  
Binodini and Usharani.  
Boro-Jalinga.  
Borokai.  
Chargoia.  
Chingoor.  
Eraligool.  
Goombira.  
Kallinecherria.  
Kuttal.  
Lallamookh.  
Maguracherria.  
Poloi.  
Rosekandy.  
Silcoorie.  
Singlacherria.  
South Cachar.  
Tilkah.

Meanwhile, as had already been requested by both employers and employees, a committee was set up by the Government of India, under the chairmanship of the Hon. S. K. Sinha, Chairman, Central Tea Board, Calcutta, to enquire into conditions in Cachar tea staff and suggest remedies. The Committee consisted of members representing the employers, workers as well as the Government of Assam, with a Tea

Expert and a Cost Accountant. Its terms of reference were :—

- (1) to enquire into the cost structure and financial conditions of the tea gardens in the Cachar District of Assam;
- (2) to enquire into the causes of the present uneconomic working of certain gardens;
- (3) to make recommendations regarding the measures required to place uneconomic gardens on a sound basis;
- (4) to report in particular (a) whether the concessional supply of foodgrains to labour could be discontinued in any estate; and if so, in what circumstances and to what extent, and (b) what arrangements should be made for the supply of foodgrains to workers on these estates.

As unity could not be achieved, the report of the Committee as amended and approved by the majority was finally signed on the 4th January, 1951 with the labour representatives putting in separate minority reports. The inquisitive readers will no doubt refer to these reports, which are likely to be published very soon.

#### 297E. Tea Industry elsewhere in Assam :

In the meantime, the condition of Tea Industry in the rest of Assam as well as India, was not far better. There was a continuous rise in the cost of production against a steady or declining market price. The average production cost in respect of certain selected Tea gardens in North East India for 1950 was estimated to be Rs. 1-9-2 per lb. while the average market price per lb. of tea realized at the Calcutta auctions during the season 1951-52 was Rs. 1-12-6 for export tea and Rs. 1-6-8 for internal tea. There was an appreciable decline in the volume of exports particularly to hard currency areas. The tea industry in India at the end of the decade was once more in the grip of a crisis similar to the one which faced it 20 years ago, though the factors causing these two crises are very different.

The present crisis in the tea industry may be traced to a curious combination of circumstances. Towards the end of 1951, for the first time in many years, world output of tea exceeded world demand. This coincided with the world slump in almost all commodity markets following the cessation of stockpiling. The need

to work off stocks acquired at the time of the Korean crisis curtailed overseas purchases. The industry, bound up as it is with practically the whole pattern of world trade in tea and hence peculiarly susceptible to fluctuations in that trade, could hardly be an exception to such all-round recession.

At about the same time by cruel coincidence the Minimum Wages Act came into force with its inevitable effects on the cost of production. Overseers competition had intensified, exports were down, prices had declined and costs continued to rise. Together these may be said to have constituted the crisis. The industry found itself unable to bridge the steadily widening gap between increasing costs and falling prices. It was not merely a case of disappearance of profits. To many gardens it meant a struggle for survival. With prospects limited by legislation of various kinds, the number of gardens ready to incur losses for several years in the hope of future gain was small. According to the latest information available, by the end of 1951, more than 100 gardens had closed down in Assam and West Bengal and about 50,000 workers had been thrown out of employment.

I am already encroaching on the events of the next decade which may better be left to my successor for a fuller treatment in the light of further facts which will come to light later. Suffice it to note here that the price of London Tea Auctions of Northern Indian Tea which was 38.5 d. on 7th February 1952, crashed down to 29.15 d. on 14th August 1952. Similarly, Calcutta Tea Auctions for export which showed a price of Rs. 1-8-3 per lb. on 4th February 1952 came down to Re. 0-15-2 per lb. in a couple of months, though by 4th August, 1952, the price had almost reverted to the former level. The Calcutta Tea Auctions price for internal consumption, however, told an altogether different story. The price which stood at Rs. 1-12-10 on 5th February 1952 crashed down to Re. 0-8-7 on 6th May 1952, and after a partial recovery towards the end of July, which forced it up to Re. 0-13-7 remained at Re. 0-12-9 on 28th August 1952.

#### 297F. Causes of the present crisis :

It was this steep and significant fall in prices which ushered in the present crisis from which the tea industry is suffering. The causes for

this slump in prices are not easy to determine. The STATIST in its issue of 19th April, 1952 discussed the stock position and after taking into account the likely increase in demand after derationing in England, computed that there might be an increase in supplies of Tea in England of about 7 per cent. It stated: "Against such a statistical background the falls in prices in the different Tea centres of the world are disappointing and somewhat puzzling."

It should, however, be noted that the slump in prices is not confined to the Tea Industry alone. As is well-known, following the outbreak of the war in Korea in June, 1950, there was a boom in prices. Prices rose mainly as a result of the stock piling of commodities in the major countries of the world, since July, 1951, however, a downward trend in prices was noticeable and with the cessation of stockpiling there has been a general fall in prices. The decline began to be more pronounced in India especially between January and March 1952. At the end of January, 1952, the general index number of wholesale prices stood at 430.3, compared with 457.5 which was the peak figure reached in April, 1951. By the middle of March 1952, the index number had dropped to 364.9. Since then, there has been a slight upward movement and the index number has been rising. At the end of April, the index number had risen to 377.4, but in the month of May, there was a slight downward tendency. The index rose again in June and at the end of that month it stood at 380.6. By the second week of July, the index had risen to 386.4 and on the 23rd August, the index stood at 391.4. The post-Korean slump has not been confined to India alone, but has affected other countries as well. Tea could hardly be an exception to this all-round recession.

Among the causes for the decline in prices are :—

- (1) Dis-continuance of the bulk purchase of tea by the United Kingdom and the re-opening

- of the London Tea Auctions early in 1951.
- (2) Cessation of stockpiling by many countries leading to a reduced off-take.
- (3) The abolition of the subsidy of 8 d. per lb. which U. K. had granted on all teas sold in the United Kingdom. There was an astonishing outturn of the early season teas in North East India, leading to over-production. Supply which up to 1951 had lagged behind, had thereafter out-stripped demand to the extent of 64 to 100 million lbs. In North East India alone, the production was 40 million lbs. more than it had been over the same period in 1951.

According to the Report of the Official Team on the Tea Industry, there are two main causes for this decline in price—one is the temporary and the other is long-term. The temporary cause is the current glut of medium quality and cheap Teas. It has been estimated that the U.K. holds about 140 million lbs. and India about a 100 million lbs. of these varieties. Over and above this with the decontrol of Tea, the U.K. Food Ministry will have to unload on the market their stock of 70 million lbs. of not too fresh Teas. Blenders, therefore, do not want to buy more of this quality of Tea just now. As a result, there have been heavy withdrawals from the auctions of these grades either because there are no bids at all or the bids are much below the cost of production and, therefore, unattractive. When the current heavy stocks are depleted prices are bound to revive. In any case, prices cannot for long remain below the cost of production without supplies becoming affected, and it is, therefore, to the interest of the consumer-countries to offer a fair price now as an insurance against a steep rise later.

The second and long-term cause is, however, a steady increase in the production in all Tea growing countries and the consequent unbalance between supply and demand. The following Table shows the figures of demand and supply in recent years :—

TABLE 5.35G  
*Figures of demand and supply of Tea*  
(In million lbs.)

	1934-38	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
World Supply	.. 981	933	985	1,028	1,100	1,163	1,212
India's share of world supply	.. 414*	592*	561	568	585	613	622
World absorption	.. 976	868	1,006	1,034	1,128	1,103	1,175

\* Includes produce of areas now in Pakistan.



Nor has the increased production been evenly distributed over all growing areas. The average annual crop harvested in North East India during the past three years was 498.88 million pounds as compared with the average of the crops produced in the three years prior to war, which was 319.50 million pounds. This increase of 179.38 million pounds was not distributed evenly throughout the tea-growing districts, the individual average outturns of which were:—

TABLE 5.35H  
*Outturn of Tea in Tea growing districts*

	Average Annual Production		Average Increase 1949-51 over 1937-39	
	1937-39 Million lbs.	1949-51 Million lbs.	Actual Million lbs.	Percent- age
Assam ..	194.75	279.61	84.86	44
Darjeeling ..	13.00	16.48	3.48	27
Dooars and Terai	84.00	152.78	68.78	62
Cachar and others	27.75	50.01	22.26	80
All Districts	319.50	498.88	179.38	56

It is estimated that even after making allowance for the anticipated increased consumption in the U.K. following derationing, there will be more Tea—certainly more of medium quality Tea—than is required in the next few years. This is bound to act as a depressant of prices. This situation can be met only by stimulating consumption through propaganda, capturing new markets and such other ways.

These factors were coupled with a prodigious outlay by tea gardens upon foodstuffs for tea garden labour. At many gardens there were stocks which would last 6 months and which would be sold to the workers at about one-fifth of the price at which they had been bought by the garden management. The amount of capital locked up in foodstuff was enormous and the extra wages might cost the industry about six crores in a full year. Higher wages might have been faced; a fall in demand might have been faced: heavy capital outlay on stocks of grain might have been faced: and the effects of increased production might have been overcome, had each come separately. Coming together they overwhelmed the industry.

## 297G. Plantation Industries other than Tea :

Under Plantation Industries are also included a small number (5,490) of self-supporting persons who maintain themselves by cultivating special crops, e.g., pine apples, oranges, fruits. Those who cultivate special crops in conjunction with ordinary cultivation of field crops are excluded from this category and included under Cultivation.

## 297H. Horticulture :

In this connection I reproduce below portions from a note on horticulture by Shri Lal Singh M. P., previously Director of Agriculture in the Punjab and Fruit Development Adviser to the Government of India :—

“Development of Horticulture deserves special emphasis from all standpoints. Looking at it from food production point, it is significant that most fruits and vegetables yield food of greater calorific value than cereals from a given area of land, leaving apart their vitamin content or their importance as a protective food. For health, they are now considered almost indispensable and it is a truism that civilisation of a country or health of its people can be largely gauged in terms of the amount of consumption of fruits and vegetables. It is well known that countries like England and Germany solved their food problems during War, largely by increasing Potato production rather than cereals. It is true that consumption of potatoes or other root crops in India is not as popular as in European countries but this is because of their high prices in India and if they could be made available at a reasonable price, their consumption must increase replaced food-grains to a considerable extent.

Secondly, from the cultivators' point of view, Horticulture, if properly carried out, (being far more remunerative than cereal production) can immensely advance his prosperity and improve his economic condition. Thirdly, as far as the consumer is concerned, he yearns for fruits and vegetables at reasonable price but unfortunately they are beyond the reach of even middle class people. It is almost scandalous to see that whereas, in highly rich countries like Australia and America, fruits like apples should be available at a few annas a seer as against couple of rupees a seer in this poverty-stricken country of ours. Fourthly, as regards States' revenue,

lands, under Horticulture yield greater revenue and taxes than those under cereals. Fifthly, even in regard to the problem of unemployment, a given unit of land provides employment to much larger number of people when under gardening than under cereal crops. Sixthly, the horticultural development would lead to the development of other allied industries like cold storage, fruit and vegetable preservation and canning etc., which in turn, would help other industries like tin manufacture and glass industry etc., opening new avenues for employment to our young men. In short, no matter from whatever angle the problem of horticulture and fruit preservation is studied, it deserves most serious consideration and sympathetic treatment at the hands of both Central and State Governments.

It is noteworthy that in U. S. A. (a meat eating country) the total output of fruits and vegetables in 1950 aggregated to over sixteen million and fourteen million tons respectively (as against about six million and about four million tons respectively for India—a vegetarian country with double the population *i.e.* less than one sixth per person)—the amount of canned fruits and fruit juices alone amounting to over fifteen crore boxes. Even Australia, with a population of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of India and having almost hundred times more area per person than India, instead of contenting itself with the production of cereals (*i.e.* extensive farming) has gone in for horticulture crops, so that Australian preserved fruits and vegetable are being marketed throughout the world and are flooding our own country.

**Scope**—Nor is the scope for its development limited in this country. India enjoys a variety of climate, ranging from extreme hot to extreme cold, which makes it possible to grow to almost perfection every kind of fruit grown in the world. In fact it has been recognised by leading horticulturists of this country that India offers greater scope for horticulture than many countries which are reputed the world over for their great achievements in horticulture, and it is a pity that India should have lagged behind in horticulture. Although exact statistics are not available, yet the estimated area under horticultural crops aggregates to about 4 million acres *i.e.*, about 3 million acres under fruits and about 1 million acres under vegetables which roughly means a little over 1 per cent of the total cropped area

in the country. More important than the acreage, however, is the scope for improvement and the vast possibilities lying unexploited. While it is true that one comes across in India a few gardens scattered here and there all over the country which are yielding bumper crops of fruits of highest quality comparable to those in any country of the world and they give enormous income amounting, in some cases, to several thousand rupees per acre and they are standing reminders to those who care to see as to what India is, majority of gardens are a disgrace to the very name of gardening—sickly looking trees with diseases and pests; and very little has so far been done to bring about revolutionary change in horticulture. It is no exaggeration to say that no branch of agriculture offers greater scope for improvement than horticulture.

Principal fruits such as mango, banana, guava and citrus occupy about 88 per cent of the area under all kinds of fruits. The production of fruits and vegetables in this country is estimated at about 6 million tons and about 4 million tons respectively. Allowing wastage of about 25 per cent of the total production in fruits in the process of harvesting and marketing, the consumption works out about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. per individual per day only and in the case of vegetables it works out to even less. On the other hand 3 ozs. of fruits and 10 ozs. of vegetables per person per day are required for a balanced diet under nutritional standards. This shows that area under fruits and vegetables is required to be increased to 100 per cent and 700 per cent respectively to meet even the minimum basic requirements for the healthy growth of the nation. The problem, therefore, is not only to make good the present deficit but also to plan for the growing need of the increasing population. This can be done partly by increasing the area under fruits and vegetables and partly by adopting improved cultural practices to get increased yield from the existing area.

The major defects in Indian horticulture lie in haphazard lay-out of gardens stocked with trees of inferior or indifferent varieties, with hardly any pruning or training system being followed, infestation with weeds, insect, pests and diseases frequently causing havoc to the crops, lack of adequate facilities for grading, packing, storage, transport and marketing and lastly want of readily available means of con-

serving the surplus to remove gluts in the market at the height of the season by cold storage and preservation of fruits and vegetables.

Government assistance for development of horticulture in other countries takes the shape of carrying out adequate research and experiments in determining the best varieties suited for various tracts, their methods of propagation, types and doses of fertilisers necessary, best irrigational, and cultural practices, remedial and control measures against insect pests and diseases, best methods of harvesting, packing, grading, marketing and finally making results of the researches and experiments available to the public and rendering advice to the horticulturists on the spot.

Since nursery plants are the foundation of fruit industry (for in the absence of plants of good varieties, all other efforts will go in vain), Government arranges the supply of nursery plants of pedigree stocks either by mass production in Government nurseries or by registering or licensing private ones, thereby requiring nursery man to produce and sell plants of only approved varieties, budded and grafted on approved stocks, plants being of specified size and shape and free from insect pests and diseases. In countries like Egypt and Australia, no one can start a nursery without a license, Government imposing strict conditions. This ensures the production of plants of standard varieties resulting in production of uniformly high quality fruit throughout the country. Since individual effort in controlling diseases and insect pests, is of little avail, as insects are no respectors of boundaries, legislations are usually enacted in most countries which require the fruit growers in a given locality to undertake remedial and control measures in the event of serious out-break of any disease or pests. Government also help either by directly providing, packing houses and cold storage or financing the growers' co-operatives through long term loans to establish the same. Refrigerated transport is of course a normal feature due to the perishable nature of the produce.

#### 297-I. Development Programme :

Following measures, if adopted for all States, should go a long way to develop horticulture on right lines :—

- (a) The staff both for research and extension requires to be greatly strengthened.
- (b) Agricultural Departments should either produce nursery plants of pedigree stocks on mass scale for supply to public at reasonable prices or introduce a licensing or registration system as in vogue in other countries. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised as efforts in this direction will be more fruitful than all efforts in other respects put together; nor is it going to put any financial burden on the States exchequer as the plan can be easily made self-supporting. Present facilities are nothing more than tinkering with the problem.
- (c) There is also need for every State Department to establish one or more model gardens of economic sizes which should be run purely on business lines so that prospective fruit growers can see for themselves the lay-out of a garden, best varieties to be planted and best maintenance of orchards and also study for themselves the economic side of gardening. Unfortunately, most Government gardens, as also Government farms, run at present, are demonstrating every thing except the economic side of the same which is the greatest drawback and nullifies all the propaganda of the department. The well known adage "An ounce of practice is better than a ton of theory" requires to be appreciated.
- (d) There is urgent need for enacting legislation which would compel the fruit growers in a given area to undertake measures to combat diseases and pests so that efforts made and expenditure incurred by an individual farmer are not nullified by the neglect and callousness of his neighbours. In the event of default, Government, of course, is to do the same at the expense of the grower.
- (e) There is much scope for improvement in the matter of packing, grading and marketing of fruit and refrigerated transport; as also in the cold storage to prevent wastage and to prolong the period of availability of fresh produce. This would also help to stabilize the prices in the interest of both the consumer and the producer and prevent violent fluctuations in prices. Fruit and vegetable

markets in cities also require to be considerably improved.

- (f) Since it is not possible for every individual State to have a really first rate Horticulturist and there is also need for co-ordinating the activities of individual States to avoid lopsided development, the Centre must have a Fruit Development Adviser to render advice on all India basis."

#### 298. Forestry and Wood Cutting :

Under Forestry and Wood cutting the number of persons is 2,767 (2,617 males and 150 females). This is an utterly insignificant number forming only one half per cent of the self-supporting persons of Division O. Most of them (1,811 total) are those engaged in planting, replanting and conservation of forests and include forest officers, rangers and guards; charcoal-burners number only 22, collectors of forest produce and lac 144 and wood cutters 790. These small numbers do not give a full idea of the importance of the wealth of forests in Assam. The forests of Assam are a very great national asset and apart from the people who are returned as self-supporting persons depending on Forest Industry, there are many for whom the forests provide secondary or tertiary means of livelihood. This fact must be carefully borne in mind while using the Census figures. During the Census only the principal and secondary means of livelihood were recorded and no information was collected about other sources of economic income. Thus the vast majority of the people living in the backward areas of the State, where the forests abound, get economic help in various ways from the forests and not all of them come under the scope of the Census enquiry. Thus, a cultivator might be getting fuel, bamboos and other requirements for his household and cultivation and if cultivation is his principal source of income and his next source of income is the plying of a bullock-cart or weaving, the census enumerator would have recorded only two names of occupations, namely (i) cultivation and (ii) transport or weaving, **but not his income from forests.** Actually without the forests the cultivator's life would be well-nigh impossible in many areas. Exploitation of the forests to obtain such necessities of life as timber, firewood, bamboos, grass, etc., and products of economic importance such as lac or *katha* is one of the

few primary industries of this partially developed state only next in importance to agriculture and tea. Extensive forests have existed from the primeval times and thanks to nature they have survived, though in a somewhat depleted condition to this day, inspite of their ruthless exploitation at the hands of men for his own use and for his cattle. Forestry, by which is meant the rearing of tree crops on scientific lines, is, however, still in its infancy, and has been practised only by Government for the last 60 years or so. The important role that the forests play in the general commercial welfare and in the economic life of the people of the state is not always fully realised. If statistics were to be collected they would convincingly show that apart from the jungle population which is directly dependent on the forests for such necessities of life as poles, firewood, wood for agricultural implements, grass and grazing for live-stock, bamboos, thorns, edible products and even medicines, a large number earn their livelihood from forest works, such as the felling of trees, fashioning of timber, casting of forest products, construction of roads, buildings, wells, tanks, etc. Besides this, employment on a large scale is provided to persons engaged in working up the raw products through cottage industries such as carpentry, tanning, bamboo works, lac propagation, shellac manufacture, *bidi*-making, *katha* boiling, *rusa* oil distillation, etc., and to many skilled labourers engaged in large scale industries utilising forest products, such as cabinet making, match manufacture, saw mills, etc. The development of forest industries presents a promising way of providing substantial source of additional income to our masses of rural areas whose main problem, as we observed in Chapter IV, is of under-employment.

Figures under Forestry are insignificant except only for Goalpara and Kamrup where they return nearly 3 per cent. Forestry, however, for the Hills Division, is very important giving employment to nearly one-tenth of the total number of self-supporting persons of Division O. The percentage in Naga Hills is as high as 72. Among the autonomous districts, Lushai Hills (3 per cent) depends least on Forestry and Wood-cutting.

#### 299. Hunting :

Hunting is entirely insignificant and includes only a microscopic number of 153, i.e., 3 per

10,000 self-supporting persons of Division O. It attains, however, a measure of significance only in the United K. & J. Hills where a total of 71, i.e., 103 per 10,000 persons are returned under 'Hunting'. Anyone who is aware of the love of Khasis for shooting and shikkar will note how this manifests itself even in the Census figures.

### 300. Fishing :

The number of persons engaged in this industry in Assam is 9,869 (9,205 males and 664 females).

It is 1.8 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons in Division 'O'. With the numerous rivers and pools of Assam, fishing is an industry of great importance to the food supply of State in many parts, inspite of its having no coastline at all. The numbers under fishing show a tremendous fall over 1931 figures which has a great deal to do with the desire to avoid returning an occupation which is traditionally considered to be rather a low way of earning one's livelihood if not actually a degrading occupation. Fishing is particularly important in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup, where it returns over 41 per cent of the self-supporting persons under Division O. It is almost the same story for the Garo Hills in the Assam Hills Division.

### 301. Dietary use of the fish :

"In a poor country like India where the masses are not able to obtain a balanced diet and

where milk is not procurable in sufficient quantities it is imperative to supplement a diet based chiefly on rice as a staple food with a chief source of proteins such as fish. This is not difficult on lands bordering the sea where fish can be obtained to an extent for the mere catching; but in an inland province like ours with rivers and tanks of a limited capacity, it becomes incumbent on us to husband our resources in this matter and to increase every possibility of obtaining more supplies by controlled and scientific means. Hence fish-culture, which means rearing of fish, assumes an important role in our province. Perhaps the most important factor would be the provision of a wider market for increased production. It may perhaps be necessary to have an intensive propaganda in favour of eating fish. This is very essential not only for the economic success of the scheme but also for the improvement of the general health of the masses. It is hardly necessary to point out that the diet of an average Indian is not only insufficient, but also it is deficient in the essential food factors like proteins, fats and vitamins. If fish could be introduced in the diet this would go a long way in restoring the balance". These words of Dr. S. S. Patwardhan can be applied almost wholesale for Assam as well. Of course, Assam has more than its due share of rivers and tanks, and it requires no propaganda drive in favour of eating fish, as there is no prejudice anywhere in the State against catching or eating fish, which abound in its many rivers, lakes and ponds.

## SECTION V

### DIVISION 1—MINING AND QUARRYING

#### 302. Introductory :

In Chapter I while describing the Natural Divisions of the State, a reference was already made to the rich mineral resources of the State, for which the reader may look up the geological summary given in Appendix 2. This is the smallest division under 'All Industries and Services', the number of self-supporting persons engaged in it being only 5,381 (4,924 males and 457 females) i.e., 55 per cent in the State. Assam Plains account for a total of 4,012 (3,690 males and 322 females) and Assam Hills Division 1,369

(1,234 males and 135 females). This division contains :—

Sub-Divn.	Industries.	Persons.
1.0	Non-metallic mining and quarrying, not otherwise classified.	760
1.1	Coal mining.	8,066
1.2	Iron mining.	3
1.3	Metal mining except iron ore.	282
1.4	Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas.	776
1.5	Stone-quarrying, clay and sand pits.	485
1.6	Mica.	2
1.7	Salt, saltpetre and saline substances.	7

In mining and quarrying, the most important sub-division is Coal Mining (3,066 total) which returns 57 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons in the State engaged in Division 1, followed by Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas (776 total, *i.e.*, 14.4 per cent) and Non-metallic Mining and Quarrying not otherwise classified (760 total, *i.e.*, 14.1 per cent) and Metal mining except Iron ore Mining (5.2 per cent). The numbers under Iron Mining, Mica, Salt, Salt-petre and Saline substances are insignificant.

### 303. Coal Mining :

This is the most important Mining Industry in the State returning 57 per cent of all self-supporting persons in the State in Division 1. The percentage in the Assam Plains is higher (59) than in the Hills (50). Coal like oil, is chiefly found in Lakhimpur, where 2,321 persons are now employed around Margherita. Outside Lakhimpur the only other coal field of any importance is at Borjan in the Naga Hills (356 persons). These are the facts due to which in the two districts of Lakhimpur and Naga Hills, sub-division 1.1 includes as high as 71 and 95 per cent of all self-supporting persons in Division 1. Another important district from this point of view is the United K. & J. Hills which also returns a high percentage of 77. Small mines are worked in this district giving employment to 327 persons. Although extensive coal deposits are known to exist in the State, especially in the district of Garo Hills, of the order of some thousands of millions of tons, only a few coal fields have so far been tapped. The major coal-bearing areas of Assam are confined to the Garo, Kashi and Jaintia Hills on the Western extremity of Assam range, the Mikir Hills of Central Assam and the Naga and Patkii Ranges of Upper Assam to the East of the Brahmaputra Valley.

From a brief note kindly supplied by Mr. Walker, an *ex-I.P.* Officer of Assam (Retired) and now General Manager of the Assam Railways & Trading Co., Ltd., we learn the following facts about the coal industry in Assam :—

“The coal industry in Assam is distributed over four separate mineral fields :—

1. Khasi and Jaintia Hills.
2. Makum.

### 3. Naga Hills.

### 4. Sibsagar.

Of the above by far the most important is the Makum Coal Field, centred on Margherita, and worked by the four collieries owned by the Assam Railways & Trading Co., Ltd.

Development of the Makum Coal Field was commenced in 1881 and in general a steady increase in output has been maintained. The world depression of the early, 1930's resulted however, in a serious setback, and in 1933, for example, the output from the Makum Coal Field was lower than at any time since 1895.

In 1939 the output of all the coal from Assam totalled 274,528 tons of which quantity 238,102 tons was produced by the A. R. & T. Company from the Makum Coal Field. Since that time further progress has been interrupted on two occasions, in 1942-43 by labour shortage caused by military operations and again in 1947-48 by labour unrest inspired by communist agitation. Since this last date, however, a steady expansion in the face of ever increasing demand has been registered and it is anticipated that the output figures for 1951 will establish a new record. It is expected that the output in the Makum Coal Field alone will amount 335,000 tons. Plans for a further increase in output from this coal field are in hand and the increased application of mechanised mining methods is now being carried out.

Coal mining in Assam presents natural difficulties of a kind not experienced in the major producing areas of Bengal and Bihar. The coal seams are steeply inclined and difficult to work. In spite of this, however, the average output per manshift from the collieries in the Makum Coal Field is considerably higher than the average for the whole of India, while the fuel value of the coal is one of the highest in the country.”

In this connection, the following extracts from the report of Dr. J. W. Whitakar, Director of Fuel Research Institute, Government of India, will be found extremely interesting and useful :—

“Although Coal is mined over a scattered area of Assam, by far the major proportion (cover 2/3rds) is obtained from the collieries of the Assam Railway and Trading Syndicate of Margherita in the Makum and Margherita coal fields in the North-Eastern Tirap Tract. The whole of the tract westward of the Tiran river



forms the Makhu or Lakhimpur coal field which has been worked for sometime by comparatively modern methods of mining. The chief collieries of this area are : Namdang, Burra-golai, Tikak, Ledo; and the Likhapani and Tipong quarries.

"The coal measures trend first from an easterly to a northerly direction and later westward, and, according to Fox, appear to be traversed by a number of strike faults. The strata and the coal seam dip at rather steep angles, and in the main area the chief producing seam varies between 15 and 60 ft. in thickness. The coal measures (Tikak Parbat stage) are probably of the oligocene age. Fox estimates that in the Mukum Coal field (about 50 sq. miles) the reserves of coal within a depth of 2,000 ft. are of the order of 1,000 million tons.

**"The quality of the Makum coal is unique in India, and perhaps in the world,** although the mining of it is beset with many difficulties, the chief of which are the steepness and thickness of the seams, the climatic conditions, and the inaccessible nature of the country.

"Compared to the Gondwana coal of the Jharia and Raniganj fields, where the average ash content ranges between 15 and 25 per cent., the Makum coal has an average ash content between 2 and 5 per cent; and in some portions may be as low as 1 per cent. The moisture of Makum coal is only from 1 to 2 per cent, and the volatile matter content ranges from 36 to 46 per cent. The average calorific value lies between 13,600 and 14,600 B.t.u. per lb. on dry coal basis. In the pure coal it is as high as 14,800 B.t.u. per lb. Furthermore, the coals of this area are known to be caking. In view of the reported small reserves of good coking and gas coals in India and of the occurrence of these fuels in Assam, remote from the chief coal producing areas of India, such coals are valuable assets, and deserve to be developed and utilized by the modern methods of preparation and treatment.

**"The unique qualities of the coal are, however, marred by its high sulphur content.** The sulphur present averages between 3 and 5 per cent, but is often as high as 7 or 8 per cent. Because of the high sulphur content, the coke produced from this coal is unsuitable for metallurgical purposes except for the smelting of sulphide ores, such as those of lead copper or zinc. For the same reason, *i.e.*, high sulphur content, the coal

is not ideally suited for boilers, as more or less severe metallic corrosion is likely to arise unless the flue gases from combustion are kept at a relatively high temperature. This involves a loss of the thermal efficiency, but this is preferable to the corrosion which is bound to ensure should the temperature fall below the dew point of the flue gas. This and other problems arising from the effects of sulphur in Assam Coal have been recognized for sometime as requiring intensive research, and under the aegis of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, preliminary research into the subject has already been carried out. Several lines of investigation have been followed but the most promising results, and perhaps the most suitable for exploitation on an industrial scale, have been obtained by treating the coal with ammonia gas at a high temperature, say 800°C. In this way a sample of Assam coal containing 6.95 per cent. of sulphur was desulphurised to yield a coke containing only 1.26 per cent of sulphur. The researches have reached the state when large scale experiments can profitably be made; arrangements are in hand to proceed accordingly.

"The coals produced from the Margherita and Ledo areas are known to have good coking characteristics. No carbonization industry has, however, been established. A few hundred tons of coke are produced annually at the Namdang Colliery by carbonizing the slack coal in 'Bee-hive' ovens. The coke is finery but of good quality, and is sold locally at Digboi, Assam results in Low Temperature Carbonization apparatus of samples of coal from Burra-golai Colliery show that about 13 cwt., of coke, about 11 gallons of liquor, and about 20-25 gallons of tar are obtainable by carbonizing a ton of coal. Laboratory assays of Makum Coals show that similar yields of tar, liquor, and coke can be obtained by carbonizing the coal at about 650°C.

"The high yield of tar and the production of good coke indicate that the coal is particularly suitable for carbonization with recovery of by-products. The gas produced during carbonization will also be a useful fuel of high calorific value."

### 304. Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas :

The total number of self-supporting persons censused under this Sub-Division is 776, and nearly all of them censused in Lakhimpur (737) which is the centre of the Oil Industry in Assam.



Crude petroleum in association with natural gas has long been known to occur in upper Assam and in the South of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The present output of oil in Assam averaging about 65,000,000 gallons a year is entirely derived from the Digboi area near Makum and is drawn from Tripian Sandstone of Upper Tertiary Age. The oil is being worked by the Assam Oil Company, a subsidiary of the Burmah Oil Company, which devoted much time, energy and money to prospecting for fresh oil supplies. It was largely through their geological department that the oil in the Tipan Sandstone was struck when the upper beds at Digboi, then believed to be of the local coal measure age, were showing signs of depletion and indeed exhaustion. Prospecting for oil is done by normal geological and geophysical methods, and lately by using aerial geological technique.

The chief products are kerosene, spirit, Batching oil, paraffin wax, bituminous products, lubricants, solvent oils, petroleum coke, diesel oil, furnace oil, high speed diesel oil, wood oil, other fuel oils, cleaning oils, mineral turpentine, refrigerator oil, etc. The kerosene is manufactured by the 'topping' process in pipe stills.

About 11.5 million cu.ft. of natural gas is produced annually in the Digboi field. This figure, however, includes the re-cycle gas from the 'gas lift' operations in the wells. The greater part of this is used for gas lifting in the wells and for steam generation and other power purposes for the actual production of the 'crude'. About  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million cu.ft. of gas is annually used for heating purposes in furnaces and boilers, and this gas could be replaced by coal or other fuels. (The composition of the gas could not be ascertained; hence it is not possible to say whether it could profitably be 'stripped' for its gasoline content).

Crude oil extraction was started in Cachar near Badarpur, Masimpur. The output of Digboi oil fields was 53.5 million gallons in 1931 and just short of 2 million gallons from Badarpur and Masimpur Oil fields. Geographically it is not well situated owing to the long and expensive railway lead to markets. The Oil fields of the Cachar District have been consistently disappointing. The Badarpur field had to be abandoned as the oil was very rapidly depleted. Exploratory drillings are continued in Patharia and Masimpur area. This area presents

a combination of drilling problems unequalled anywhere else in the World. The most important accumulation of petroleum in Assam are concentrated in two regions: in the Lakhimpur District in upper Assam and in Cachar in the Surma Valley. In both these areas the oil is associated with Tertiary Strata which are younger than the beds of Nummulitic Age.

Gas and Oil are recorded in the Upper Tertiary Supra-Nummulitic beds at three places in at the southern foot of the Khasi Hills around Shella. Though they give indications of an extensive oil horizon along the foot of the Hills, the existence of the oil field at great depths can only be proved by 'blind boring' and so it is an extremely speculative proposition.

### 305. Stone-quarrying, clay and sand pits :

Total number 485 mostly in Sibsagar and Kamrup followed by the United K. & J. Hills District.

#### 305A. Limestones :

The following extract from "Industrial Planning and Development of Assam" by Shri K. D. Guha, throws considerable light on the extent of limestone deposits in our state.

"Large reserves of limestone occur in the Garo, Khasi, Jaintia and Mikir Hills. There are several limestone bands interbedded with sandstone, which are coal-bearing at many places. The limestones are of Eocene age, and some of them are suitable for the manufacture of Portland cement, calcium carbide and calcium cyanamide.

"The beds of limestone crop out continually from the Western Garo Hills to a considerable distance along the foot of the southern scrap of Khasi Hills and overlie the Ghera (Tura) Sandstones which contained excellent total in Garo Hills and in western Khasi Hills. The limestones are particularly rich in fossil nummulites and hence known as Nummulitic Limestone.

"**Garo Hills :** Beds of these limestones stretch along the entire length of the Garo Hills from Damalgiri on the west to Pendengru on the east. The best exposures of these limestones are in the Valley of the Simsang, wherein the gorge just above Siju Atkeka, very good limestones can be quarried. The thickness of the beds in Garo Hills is very much less than their representatives

in the Khasi Hills and the quality is also slightly inferior”.

“**Khasi and Jaintia Hills :** The limestones of Garo Hills continue eastwards along the edge of the Sylhet plains. These bands increase in their thickness and near the Jadukata river attains a thickness of about 1,000 feet. The limestones can be easily quarried from near Begali Bazar to Rajai. The estimated reserves of limestone of this locality is at least 1,000,000,000 tons. Thence onward the bands recede from the plains of Sylhet, though they are found in considerable thickness in isolated localities in the Jaintia Hills”.

“**North Cachar :** Limestone from considerable crags in the Litang Valley and are well developed in the Lubha, the Kopili, the Kharkor and numerous tributary streams. Sometime they attain a thickness of 500-700 feet at Jakersing Hill. Here the limestones are locally used for mortar, building and other purposes.”

“**Mikir Hills :** Considerable quantities of nummulitic limestones are present in the western Mikir Hills. They are found in the Disboijan, the Jamuna and from the Borojan to Deopani. The best limestone available in the Mikir Hills occur between the Borojan to Deopani; and are easy of access. The thickness of the limestone band near Borojan is about 200 feet.”

### 306. Sillimanite :

Sillimanite, a mineral used for making refractory bricks and certain types of ceramic wares, occurs at a number of places in the north-western portion of the Nongtoin State, Khasi Hills. The average height of the area is about 3,000 ft. above sea-level. Sillimanite has been recorded in 21 localities nearabout Nongmaweit, Nongpur and Nongbain villages. The majority of the deposits contain massive Sillimanite with a little corundum. Total minimum quantity of Sillimanite available is 251,000 tons.

The deposits are, however, very unfavourably situated in inaccessible country and the transport charges to the Brahmaputra will be very high.

Our knowledge of the metalliferous ore-deposits of the State of Assam is limited to the sketchy observations made by different observers from time to time. Metals such as Gold, Silver, Lead, Copper, Molybdenum, Mercury, etc., were observed in native and combined state. But they, upto now are of academic interest only. There has been no systematic survey of the ‘finds’; and so it is useless now to speculate on their industrial and economic possibilities.

### 307. Iron Mining, Mica, Salt, Saltpetre and Saline Substances :

These are all negligible and can be ignored, as only 6, 4 and 13 persons, respectively per 10,000 self-supporting persons of Division I are engaged in them.

## SECTION VI

### DIVISION 2—PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURE OF FOODSTUFFS, TEXTILES, LEATHER AND PRODUCTS THEREOF

#### 308. Introductory :

The self-supporting persons engaged in the occupations specified in this Division number only 25,435 (19,183 males and 6,252 females), out of whom Assam Hills Division accounts for a total of 2,749 only. Division 2 as we have already seen accounts for barely 2.6 per cent of the self-supporting persons in all industries and services in this state against 18 per cent in Madras and 20 in Madhya Pradesh. Wearing

apparel (except footwear), and made up textile goods account for the largest percentage (38) of all self-supporting persons in Division 2 followed by Cotton textiles (27), Grains and pulses (12), Leather, leather products and footwear (8.6), Vegetable oil and dairy products (5.2), in this descending order. Sugar industries (0.5), Beverages (1.3), Tobacco (1.9), Food industries otherwise unclassified (3.6), are the remaining unimportant sub-divisions. No single spinning or weaving mill exists in Assam. Hence

the large number 9,579 *i.e.*, 37.7 per cent under Wearing apparel and made up textile goods consists largely of tailors, dress-makers and darners, and makers of umbrellas. They also include some weavers who work whole time by plying their handlooms in manufacturing coarse varieties of garments. In this respect the figures for Naga Hills (70 per cent) and Lushai Hills (76 per cent) in the Hills Division and Sibsagar and Lakhimpur (64 per cent each) in the Plains are particularly striking.

I have already emphasized the need for increased production of fruits and vegetables to meet the present deficit and the requirements of an expanding population in Para 297-E earlier. The role of the fruit preservation industry which is closely and in fact indispensably linked up with horticulture may now be discussed. Here I cannot do better than to quote at some length from a very interesting note prepared by Shri Lal Singh, M.P., formerly Director of Agriculture, Punjab and Fruit Development Adviser to the Government of India, extracts from which have already been given in para 297-E. "No matter how efficiently a fruit garden may be managed, there is bound to be a good quantity of fruit which being undersized or oversized, underripe or over ripe, blemished or bruised, windfalls or slightly injured, is unfit for sale in the fresh fruit market and which at present either goes to waste or is mixed with high quality fruit, thus lowering the value of the whole consignment. This fruit which by no means is unwholesome can nevertheless be profitably utilised for the manufacture of various kinds of by-products like jams, jellies, marmalades, juices, pickles, vinegar, etc., thereby not only enabling the grower to realize handsome income but saving for the country a substantial quantity of food. Besides, due to the perishable nature of fruits and vegetables, there is always a glut in the market at the peak of the season which not only suppresses the price to very unremunerative level but also causes wastage of good quantity.

The temporary glut in other countries is averted by preserving this artificial surplus either in cold storage or by means of canning, thereby prolonging the period of availability of fruits and vegetables in the market and equalising or stabilizing the prices of fruits and vegetables to

the advantage of both the grower and the consumer. The violent fluctuations in the price structure of fruits and vegetables within a short period of weeks or a month (*i.e.*, a certain fruit or vegetable selling, at the height of season, for a few annas a seer, and afterwards price shooting up eight or ten times within a month or two) is a phenomenon peculiar to the underdeveloped countries, and is highly detrimental both to the consumers and the growers, as also to the health of the nation.

Fruit preservation is considered of such a vital and national importance as to demand a top priority in other countries and every possible effort is made to develop this industry both on commercial scale and home scale. In order to encourage this on home scale, food preservation is made an integral part of education in Girls' Schools so that every house-wife is able to conserve every ounce of surplus fruit and vegetable grown in the backyard of her houses, *i.e.*, conserving in season of plenty for consumption in season of scarcity. Food preservation is also of strategic importance in times of war, as armies can only subsist on canned or dehydrated food, the supply of fresh fruits and vegetables being out of question. India should have learnt lesson from the last war when it made feverish attempts to develop food preservation industry as also dehydration but miserably failed, even after wasting millions of rupees, as industries cannot be developed overnight.

It will be interesting to note that leaving apart colossal quantities of fruits and vegetables preserved on home scale by house-wives the annual output of commercial canneries in U. S. A. with a population of less than one half of India, aggregate to about 110 lacs of tons or roughly 30 crores maunds of canned fruits, vegetables and juices. As against this, the total quantity preserved in India at present does not exceed 10,000 tons worth about two crores of rupees, which is not even 1/2000 part per capita consumption, leaving aside preservation on home scale.

In India food preservation industry suffers from certain handicaps. Firstly, fruits and vegetables of standard varieties are not easily available and there is also dearth of trained personnel and suitable advice on the subject from authoritative quarters. Secondly leaving apart

lack of experience, and initial mistakes that every country is likely to commit in the early stages of the Industry, the Indian Food Preserver has to pay much higher price for Indian sugar, containers (both glass jars and tins), food preservation machinery, (manufactured in foreign countries) higher freight charges, besides suffering from lack of credit facilities and general apathy of the Government, all of this making it difficult for him to compete with imported products or to export his products even though there is a good prospect of developing in due course export trade for products of certain fruits, peculiar to India, like mangoes and guavas.

#### GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Government assistance to food preservation in other countries has taken different shapes, depending upon the demands of the industry from time to time. A few instances may be cited as under :—

#### IN AUSTRALIA :

- (a) Supply of sugar is guaranteed at the lowest world market rate.
- (b) Concession rate is afforded in freight for transport of raw materials to the canneries and finished products from the canneries to the ports or cities.
- (c) Duty-free import of tin-plate, machinery, etc.
- (d) Installation of fruit preservation factories at government expense for canning the fruits of the growers at cost price or handing over the factory to grower on payment of price by easy instalments spread over long period—in fact the biggest factory in Australia was actually put up by the Government.
- (e) Subsidizing the purchase of machinery.
- (f) Subsidy on export of preserved fruit products.

In South-Africa also somewhat similar concessions are claimed to be given as in Australia especially rebate on the sugar price.

#### IN CANADA :

- (a) Aiding exporters against loss involved in foreign trade.
- (b) Direct subsidy to the preserver to enable him to market the finished product at reasonable price, such as in British Columbia a subsidy of 6 cents per pound on certain fruits purchased by the canner and a further subsidy of 1.75 cent on every pound of jam produced, Eastern Canada offering 3 cent per pound as subsidy.
- (c) Subsidizing the sale of vegetables to the canner on the condition that the canner does not pay less than the stipulated price to the grower.
- (d) Government paying storage allowance per case of preserved food.

#### IN U.S. A. :

Subsidizing the sale of fruit products—in some instances the consumer paying only 60% of the prices, the rest 40% being paid by the Government. For School lunches, Government purchases large quantities for free consumption by children (in million dollars worth of fruit juices).

#### IN U.K.

Duty free importation of machinery.

The above are a few instances which came to my notice in Australia and U.S.A. or which have been reported in authentic publications. Other countries are also said to be offering a large number of concessions; but they are not being cited for want of authentic record. Besides above concessions, every country, of course, provides ample facilities for extensive research in various aspects of fruit and vegetable preservation as also facilities for advanced training in the subject to provide necessary trained personnel to the industry and advice of experts is available to the industry at every step—facility which is greatly lacking in this country. As already mentioned previously, subject of fruit preservation is a compulsory subject in all the girl schools.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT :

In view of the steps generally taken in other advanced countries for the development of this

Industry and the handicaps suffered by Indian Fruit Preservation, I strongly recommend the following :—

(a) Creating a fruit preservation development fund by levying a small cess on the production of fruits and vegetables, as also on the manufactured products: Government adding double the amount to the same, as its own contribution.

(b) Setting up a Fruit Preservation Development Board at the Centre to administer this fund, provision being made for effective association of representatives of this industry and other connected interests. This Board will be responsible for the development of this Industry on All India basis by way of enforcing quality standards, supervising research, training, standardization, technical advice and maintaining statistics about the industry and in such other ways.

(c) Providing adequate credit facilities to the Fruit preservers both in the installation of plants and in the manufacture and sale of their products.

(d) Exempting fruit preservation machinery, tin plates, and other requirements of industry from Import Duty.

(e) Exempting Indian Fruit Products from sales tax for a developmental period of 5 years.

(f) Guaranteeing the supply of Indian sugar at world market rate, more or less on the lines adopted in Australia and other countries. This deserves top most priority.

(g) Shifting fruit and vegetable products in lower category or Railway freight rates, as these products at present have to pay a very high freight charges. Special reduced freight rate should be afforded for the transport of raw material to the factories.

(h) Requiring Army and Canteen stores to purchase all their requirements from the indigenous sources, and canneries being asked to produce standard quality products.

(i) Introducing Food Preservation Course as an integral part of domestic science in all Girl Schools in India.

Although other countries have invariably offered even direct subsidy to the fruit preservers yet considering the present financial position of the country, I feel above steps are the absolute minimum at the present stage, to encourage people to undertake this industry in right earnest.

The financial implications of the above have not been worked out as no direct expenditure is involved on the part of the Government for the development of this Industry, almost all the financial assistance being indirectly afforded."

### 309. Cotton Textiles :

Total numbers are 6,867, practically all under cotton spinning and weaving groups. It is of the greatest importance in Kamrup, where it returns 53 per cent of the total in Division 2, against 33 in Cachar and 76 in Garo Hills. The very high figure of Garo Hills though concealing a small total number of 242 is an indication of its importance as the only cotton producing district of Assam. Garo Hills in 1950 produced an estimated 7,500 bales (of 392 pounds each), of cotton, out of an estimated yield of 9,300 for the State. Cotton ginning, cleaning, pressing, dyeing, bleaching, printing, perparation and sponging, etc., are all of a very small significance in Assam, having only 499 self-supporting persons engaged to them.

### 310. Handloom Weaving :

Handloom weaving is extremely important in Assam though the census figures (6,368), cannot bring out its full significance because mostly weaving is a subsidiary industry carried on by cultivators of Assam in their spare time. During the war time and long thereafter until very recently, they got a considerable artificial fillip by the textile shortage in the country. But even during the War thereafter the condition of many textile weavers was not quite flourishing because there was even a greater shortage of yarn. Describing how there are some 2½ million workers engaged in India in the handloom industry as against seven lakh workers in cotton mills, M. P. Gandhi says, "No scheme of social security on a nationwide scale is possible when the national income and living standards are so low. It is in this context that the case for handicrafts is stressed and hand-weaving, as a means of employment and income

to millions and as an instrument of equitable distribution of national income all over the huge sub-continent, acquires a special significance. It offers a solution to the problem of mass unemployment and poverty in a backward economy to a degree which no other single industry can tackle".

I have discussed this industry in some detail in Appendix 7, which could be referred to in this connection.

### 311. Foodstuffs :

The food industry of Sub-Divisions 2.0 and 2.1 are important in Assam. Together they account for 3,589 self-supporting persons or about 14.1 per cent of those under Division 2. Nowgong (33.8), Goalpara (20.1), and Darrang (20.0) are most important centres of this industry. Nowgong especially has a large number of rice mills. In Assam Hills this industry is practically non-existent.

### 312. Leather, leather products and footwears :

Sub-division 2.9 (leather, leather products and footwears), comes next in importance to grains and pulses. About 9 per cent of the self-supporting persons of Division 2 representing 2,195 persons are engaged in the leather industry which is the principal means of livelihood of the chamars and cobblers all over the State. Only 50 are tanners, while the number of cobblers and all other makers and repairers of boots, shoes, sandals and clogs is 1,983.

### 313. Vegetable oil and dairy products :

Sub-division 2.2. (vegetable oil and dairy products) accounts for 5.2 per cent of the self-supporting persons in Division 2, the actual number being 1,332 in Assam. Dairy products are manufactured to a certain extent all over the State. Comparatively large numbers are engaged in this industry in the districts of Goalpara, Darrang, United K. and J. Hills and Lushai Hills. Table 5.36 below gives the area under all oil seeds for the year ending 31st March, 1950, in the different districts of Assam.

TABLE 5.36

*Area under oil seeds in 1949-1950*

Name of District	Area (in acres) under oil seeds for the year ending 31st March 1950
Cachar	8,322
Goalpara	92,973
Kamrup	86,079
Darrang	46,986
Nowgong	53,861
Sibsagar	30,805
Lakhimpur	24,712
United K. and J. Hills	1,700
Naga Hills	100
Lushai Hills	2,000
Garo Hills	6,666
Mishmi Hills } Abor Hills }	1,400
Balipara Frontier Tract	300
Tirap Frontier Tract	-
<b>Assam</b>	<b>355,904</b>

There are 17 oil mills in Assam employing about 636 persons. Against this we have 86 rice mills employing 1,575 persons. Apart from this there are numerous *ghanis* which crush 'till' and mustard seeds in small quantities. As pointed out by the Planning Commission in their Report, village oil industry can be extensively developed as a cottage industry.

### 314. Remaining Sub-Divisions of Division 2 :

The remaining industries under Division 2 can briefly be disposed of. Sugar industries attain a small prominence in Sibsaagar where they account for 5 per cent of the total self-supporting persons in the district under Division 2; tobacco in Goalpara, (11.6), textile industries otherwise unclassified in Naga Hills, (15.1), leather, leather products and footwears in Lakhimpur (2) and Darrang, (11). The making of beverages is an important industry in United K. and J. Hills where 288 persons are employed in industries making orange, lemon and pine apple squashes and drinks and making of pickles and jam.

## SECTION VII

DIVISION 3—PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURE OF METALS, CHEMICALS  
AND PRODUCTS THEREOF315. **Introductory :**

Division 3 accounts for only 16,655 self-supporting persons or 1.7 per cent of the self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services. This is not surprising having regard to the fact that India as a whole, has no chemicals, and iron and steel industries have yet to be developed on any appreciable scale—in Assam they are entirely non-existent. The percentage distribution under this Division among the more important sub-divisions is given below :—

Sub-Divn. No.	Industries	Persons	Percentage of Division 3
3.0	Metal products otherwise unclassified.	8,509	51
3.3	Transport Equipment	4,212	25
3.8	Manufacture of chemical products otherwise unclassified.	1,870	11
3.5	Machinery (other than electrical, including engineering workshops)	1,109	7

316. **Manufacture of metal products otherwise unclassified :**

Sub-Division 3.0 (manufacture of metal products otherwise unclassified) accounts for 8,509 self-supporting persons (8,039 males and 470 females) or over 51 per cent of the total number in Division 3. This sub-division includes 6,351 black-smiths and makers of implements, 791 workers in copper, brass and bell metal, 1,196 tin-smiths, etc. Every district, therefore, naturally shows a fairly large percentage of self-supporting persons of this sub-division in Subsidiary Table 5.11. Darrang takes the palm with 87 followed by Kamrup (63), whereas Lakhimpur (24) and Goalpara (29) bring up the rear in the Assam Plains Division. In the backward hill districts in Assam Hills Division, the percentage in this sub-division is extremely high. In the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District it is as high as 95, whereas it is 86 in Lushai Hills and 82 in Garo Hills. Aboor Hills, Tirap Frontier Tract and Balipara Frontier Tract

show 100 per cent under this sub-division. It merely means that almost all the persons thus classified are of black-smiths, copper-smiths or tin-smiths or workers in brass, bell metal, etc.

317. **Transport Equipment :**

Sub-division 3.3, transport equipment, accounts for over 25 per cent of the self-supporting persons of Division 3, the actual number being 4,212. The district which attracts particular attention is Lakhimpur with 51 per cent under this sub-division. This is not merely due to the railway workshops and workshops for other kinds of transport equipment but also numerous motor workshops in this comparatively most industrialised district of Assam. Numerous motor workshops and mechanics at Shillong in the United K. & J. Hills district enable it to return 20 per cent under this sub-division; but their overall numbers are small, only a total of 111 self-supporting persons, out of whom only 10 are in the rural areas of the district. Though Assam has no coastline, building and repairing of ships and boats account for a total of 67, all of them repairers and makers of the numerous boats which ply on its long network of rivers and other inland waterways. Manufacture of aircraft returns nil; coach builders and makers of carriages, palki, rickshaw, etc., number 316, while another 364 are included under manufacture of all other transport equipment.

318. **Manufacture of Chemical Products otherwise unclassified :**

Sub-division 3.8, manufacture of chemical products otherwise unclassified, accounts for 1,870 self-supporting persons or about 11 per cent of all who are in this Division. Largest numbers are returned by Goalpara which is due to the Assam Match Factory situated in that district. It is a large Swedish concern now manned almost entirely by an Indian staff. It was established in 1925, the manufacture of matches commencing in 1926. It has a total labour force of 1,220 persons. Apart from sick and earned leave to its employees, the Company also provides medical and recreational facilities, e.g.,



Canteen and rest shelter with a radio, occasional cinema shows on a 16 mm. film projector and a sports and recreational ground. Match wood is the principal raw materials used, which is obtained through the Forest Department of the Government of Assam. With its present invested capital of Rs. 22 lakhs, its average annual production is approximately 42,000 cases per annum (one case containing 7,200 match boxes). In 1951 the Factory paid an excise duty over Rs. 58 lakhs to the Central Government.

### 319. Machinery including engineering workshops :

Sub-division 3.5 machinery (other than electrical machinery including engineering workshops) accounts for 1,109 self-supporting persons. *i.e.*, 6.7 per cent of the self-supporting persons under Division 3 in the State. Cachar (14.4) and Lakhimpur (10.2) stand out in this sub-division. Assam Hills though more backward shows a greater percentage (11.8) than the Assam Plains (6.4), Naga Hills (30) being particularly outstanding in this respect.

### 320. Remaining Sub-Divisions of Division 3 :

3.1, *i.e.*, iron and steel (basic manufacture), 3.2, *i.e.*, non-ferrous metals (basic manufacture), 3.4, *i.e.*, electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances and supplies, 3.6, *i.e.*, basic industrial chemicals, fertilizers and power alcohol and 3.7, *i.e.*, medical and pharmaceutical preparations can safely be ignored as of negligible importance in Assam. Numbers of self-supporting persons in these sub-divisions are as follows :—

3.1 ... ..	309
3.2 ... ..	48
3.4 ... ..	500
3.6 ... ..	7
3.7 ... ..	91

### 321. Industrial Chemicals :

Industrial chemicals form a class of basic or key industries which Assam can only dream of, and which is vital to the full-fledged development of the State. The following remarks of the

Madhya Pradesh Industries Committee regarding that State appear to apply with equal force to Assam :—

“The establishment and development on economic lines of the chemical industry is only possible if it is viewed as one group rather than as consisting of so many independent items, since they are so closely inter-linked with, and are inter-dependent upon, one another. The importance of this group of industries lies in the fact that the industrial use of the raw materials of the province depends upon the availability of these chemicals. As the Tariff Board on the Heavy Chemical Industry says, “One of the principal grounds on which the chemical industry may establish a claim to public assistance is that it is a key industry. Its products are used in most other industries, in the textile industry, the leather industry, the paper industry, the glass and porcelain industry, the rubber industry, in the making of artificial silk, of paints and varnishes, soap and candles and the purification of mineral and vegetable oils. If India is ever to become industrialised on any considerable scale, the establishment of the chemical industry on a firm basis is clearly a matter of great importance. They go on to remark; ‘There is another point of view which also makes the industry one of national importance. During the last few years industrial advancement as well as the development of agriculture has been largely a question of applied chemistry. In every country, therefore, today more and more attention is paid to chemical research both for industrial and for agricultural purposes. The real foundations of industrial chemical research can never be laid in any country which does not possess a chemical industry; for though much knowledge may be acquired in laboratories, unless that knowledge is applied in practice to the needs of industry and agriculture, little or no advance is possible. The vast mineral, forests and agricultural resources of India cannot be exploited to their fullest extent unless opportunities are given to chemicals to acquire practical knowledge in works where the process of manufacture are in actual operations.’”

## SECTION VIII

## DIVISION 4—PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURE—NOT SPECIFIED ELSEWHERE

322. **Processing and manufacture not specified elsewhere :**

Processing and manufacture not elsewhere specified is not important for Assam, containing as it does only 3.9 per cent of the total self-supporting persons engaged in all Industries and Services in the State. It accounts for a total of 38,006 self-supporting persons out of whom all but 3,507 are in the Assam Plains Division. Division 4 is of some importance in Goalpara and Kamrup where it accounts for 8 and 7 per cent, respectively of self-supporting persons of Division 4. The percentage distribution and total numbers in its more important sub-division is given below :—

Sub-Divn. No.	Industries	Persons	Percentage
4.6	Wood and wood products other than furniture and fixtures.	18,644	49
4.1	Products of petroleum and coal.	5,951	16
4.0	Manufacturing industries otherwise unclassified.	5,847	16
4.4	Non-metallic mineral products.	4,526	12
4.9	Printing and allied industries.	1,653	4.3

Sub-divisions like 4.2—Bricks, tiles and other structural clay products (total number 607 *i.e.*, 1.6 per cent), 4.3 Cement, cement pipes and other cement products (total number 431 *i.e.*, 1.1 per cent), 4.5 Rubber products (total number 206 *i.e.*, 0.5 per cent), 4.7—Furniture and fixture (total number 139 *i.e.*, 0.4 per cent), and 4.8—Paper and paper products (total number 2 *i.e.*, 0 per cent), are of negligible importance, considering either the total numbers employed in them or their percentage share of Division 4. Printing and allied industries show a total number of 1,653 *i.e.*, 4 per cent of the industries in this Division, which is in itself an index of illiteracy and backwardness of Assam in the fields of arts and education. It is of some importance in Lakhimpur which accounts for over 10 per cent. Similar is the case with Nowgong (9.3 per cent), in respect of bricks, tiles and other structural clay products; and in the United

K. and J. Hills (20 per cent), for cement and cement pipes and other cement products.

323. **Paper and Paper Industries :**

The total number of self-supporting persons engaged in paper and paper products industry is only 2. Assam is abundantly provided with natural resources for the manufacture of paper. The investigation carried out, however, shows that except bamboo, lime and coal, the rest of the raw materials will have to be imported. The report of Shri S. N. Bhandari, on the prospect of paper industry in Assam gives a useful review of the factors to be taken into consideration before starting a paper industry in Assam. After an examination of several sites and taking everything into consideration, he recommended Karimganj as the best site for the industry in view of special advantages enjoyed by it :—

(i) The major portion of the requirement of bamboos can come by river and, if necessary, the rest can come by rail both from North Cachar Hills and other places of Sylhet district. Coal and lime can be brought down by steamer from Chhatak area straight into the mills. The coal from Ledo area can come direct by rail and Bengal coal can come by steamer-river being navigable all the year round.

(ii) Adequate river water supply, both in quality and quantity.

(iii) Finished product can be distributed all over the province by rail, road, steamer and country boats.

(iv) Area is thickly populated and can supply enough local labour.

(v) Karimganj is a growing town and will provide other amenities and educational facilities for the factory population.

324. **Wood and wood products other than furniture and fixtures (4.6) :**

This sub-division alone accounts for very nearly half (48.8 per cent), of the total number of self-supporting persons in the Division 4; it includes sawyers, carpenters, basket-makers and people engaged in other Industries of woody

materials including leaves. It is also a common industry all over the State, as will be seen from a perusal of Subsidiary Table 5.12 and the District Index of Non-Agricultural Occupations given in Part I-B of the Report. The total number of saw mills in Assam is 23, employing about 1,370 persons.

### 325. **Manufacturing Industries otherwise unclassified (4.0) :**

This sub-division accounts for about 16 per cent of the self-supporting persons of this Division, the total number being 5,847; it includes workers in precious metals (gold-smiths, silver-smiths, makers of jewellery and ornaments), as well as watch-makers, toy makers, etc. A perusal of the figures for this Sub-Division in Subsidiary Table 5.12 given in Part I-B of the Report shows that in all districts of the State this profession is quite common. The smallest percentage in Assam is to be found in Sibsagar, (6) and Lakhimpur, (9).

### 326. **Products of Petroleum and Coal (4.1) :**

It accounts for a total of 5,951 self-supporting persons of whom practically all (5,838), were censused in Lakhimpur. They are all employed by the Assam Oil Company for the extraction of the mineral oils from the Digboi Oil fields belt. This factor enables Lakhimpur to return 54.2 per cent of all self-supporting persons of Division '4.0' to be returned under Sub-Division 4.1. In all other cases, except in Naga Hills (9), it is negligible. The oil industry in Assam in common with all other industries, was greatly affected during the decade 1941-50 by the Second World War. The General Manager of the Assam Oil Company, Ltd., Digboi, was good enough to send me the following information regarding the work of his Company in the past decade.

"On instructions from the Government of India, all prospecting operations were stopped on the outbreak of war and drilling effort was concentrated in areas known to be productive. This, in fact, meant the Assam Oil Company's field at Digboi. This yield, which during the previous decade had increased its output by a little over 20 per cent had been stabilised at about 65 million gallons yearly for some years, but with the insatiable demand of the fighting forces, grant efforts were made to increase oil production. Some success was achieved and for 1943 production was raised by 12 per cent and

for 1944 by 27 per cent. This increased withdrawal of oil, however, did harm to the oil sands and it has only been by increasing drilling effort and the discovery of a further easterly extension of the oil pools that it has been possible to produce enough oil to keep the Refinery working at full capacity.

"With the end of hostilities, the Assam Oil Co., and the Burmah Oil Co., (India Concessions), Ltd., started on their prospecting operations again. The Assam Oil Co., drilled three wells on their Makum-Namdang lease but were reluctantly forced to the conclusion that oil was not present in commercial quantities. Subsequently, a well was drilled at Barsill not far from Amguri. The Burmah Oil Co., (I.C) Ltd., started to resume operations for a deep well at Masimpur but this was closed down pending discussions with Government, over the terms of lease. Preparations were also started for a very deep well in Tripura State but staff and materials had unfortunately, to be withdrawn shortly after the Partition as the only access to the site was through East Pakistan. A well was, however, successfully completed at Tiru Hills, near Amguri, but this failed to find oil.

"At the end of the decade plans are in hand to test an area in the Naga Hills and also to test the prospects of the main Brahmaputra Valley. Meantime, also efforts to extend the Digboi oil-field were continued and were meeting with success. The search for additional oil in Assam is urgent and important for existing oilfields are a wasting asset which can only be replaced by new discoveries of oil.

The Assam Oil Company Ltd., who found employment for 6,080 persons at the beginning of the decade were employing over 7,600 by 1950. During the same period, however, the annual payroll rose from Rs. 44 lakhs to over Rs. 98 lakhs."

### 327. **Non-metallic mineral products (4.4) :**

Sub-division 4.4 includes potters and makers of earthenware, porcelain and crockery, glass bangles, beads, necklaces, etc. It is fairly common all over the State except Lakhimpur which shows only 2 per cent under this Sub-Division against more than 10 in every other Plains District. This sub-division is particularly important in Shillong in United K. and J. Hills (35 per cent).

## SECTION IX

## DIVISION 5—CONSTRUCTION AND UTILITIES

## 328. Construction and Utilities :

Division 5 is another unimportant division in Assam engaging not even 1.3 per cent of self-supporting persons engaged in all Industries and Services. Their total is 12,278 (11,476 males and 802 females), Assam Hills Division claiming only 1,523 (1,464 males and 59 females). Construction and Utilities consist of the following sub-divisions :—

Sub-Divn.	Services	Persons
5.1	Buildings	5,557
5.2	Roads, bridges and other transport	1,649
5.3	Telegraph and telephone lines	56
5.4	Irrigation and other agriculture works	181
5.5	Works and services—electric power and gas supply	212
5.6	Domestic and Industrial water supply	209
5.7	Sanitary works and services including scavengers	2,020
5.0	Works otherwise unclassified	2,934
Total		12,278

The percentage distribution in the more important sub-divisions is as follows :

(a) Construction and maintenance of buildings.	45
(b) Construction and maintenance of works otherwise unclassified.	20
(c) Sanitary works and services including scavengers.	16

All other sub-divisions show less than 2 per cent each of the total number of self-supporting persons in the Division. Their numbers as given above are so small as not to merit individual discussion.

## 329. Construction and maintenance of buildings :

This is by far the most important sub-division under Construction and Utilities engaging nearly half the total number of self-supporting persons.

The percentage in Assam Plains Division is far higher (49) than in the case of the Assam Hills Division (16). Almost all the Plains districts with the exception of Goalpara (18.7), show a fairly high percentage of people in this sub-division, the highest being 60.6 in Nowgong; Sib-sagar which is next to Goalpara returns 46 per cent. Masons and brick-layers number only 2,190; perhaps many others have been included among persons engaged in the construction or maintenance of buildings other than buildings made of bamboo or similar materials, who number as many as 2,954. There are reported to be only 327 stone-cutters and dressers, while the painters and decorators of houses are only 86.

## 330. Construction of Works otherwise unclassified :

Construction of works otherwise unclassified includes another one-fifth of the total number of self-supporting persons, employed in Construction and Utilities.

## 331. Sanitary Works and Services including scavengers :

Sub-Division 5.7 (Sanitary Works and Services including scavengers), accounts for 16.4 per cent of the self-supporting persons in Division 5, against 15.4 in Madhya Pradesh. The actual number is 2,020. This service claims a fairly even percentage of self-supporting persons under Division 5, all over the State except in Darrang (3) and Sibsagar (4). The percentage in Goalpara is as high as 65, 45 in Kamrup and 42 in Cachar.

There appears to be some slight mistake in enumeration, or tabulation, because all persons under construction and utilities in Garo Hills are shown under Sub-Division 5.7. This cannot be so as there is already a P. W. D. Sub-division in the Garo Hills with head-quarters at Tura, whose energetic Assistant Engineer was very helpful in the Census operations of this district. At least his works staff should have featured under 5.1 or 5.2; if so, there would not have been a 100 per cent entry under 5.7.

## SECTION X

## DIVISION 6—COMMERCE

## 332. Commerce :

Commerce is the third most important Division among the 10 Divisions of all Industries and Services in Assam, next only to services not elsewhere specified (15) and primary industries not elsewhere specified (14.6). It engages 10.9 per cent of all self-supporting persons engaged in all Industries and Services, against 17.2 in Madhya Pradesh. Their actual number is 106,293 (97,311 males and 8,982 females); Assam Hills Division accounts for 9,658 (6,902 males and 2,756 females), and Assam Plains Division the rest. Of its sub-divisions only three, retail trade otherwise unclassified (51 per cent), retail trade in foodstuffs including beverages and narcotics (33) and retail trade in textiles and leather goods (7), are really important. Of the rest, for example, retail trade in fuel, including petrol (1.2), wholesale trade in foodstuffs (3), wholesale trade in commodities other than foodstuffs (3), real estate (0.2), in insurance (0.3), and money-lending, banking and other financial business (1.2) can easily be ignored. Table 5.37 below gives the sub-divisions with their total number and percentage share of the number of self-supporting persons engaged in Commerce.

TABLE 5.37

*Number of persons in the various sub-divisions of Commerce and their percentage*

Sub-Divn.	Services	Persons	Percentage
6.0	Retail trade otherwise unclassified	54,487	51.3
6.1	Retail trade in foodstuffs (including beverages and narcotics)	35,081	33
6.2	Retail trade in fuel (including petrol)	1,232	01.2
6.3	Retail trade in textiles and leather goods	7,059	6.6
6.4	Wholesale trade in foodstuffs	3,204	3.0
6.5	Wholesale trade in commodities other than foodstuffs	3,405	3.2
6.6	Real Estate	230	.2
6.7	Insurance	331	.3
6.8	Money lending, banking and other financial business	1,266	1.2
Total		106,293	100.0

## 333. Retail trade otherwise unclassified :

This is by far the largest single sub-division under Commerce. All districts uniformly show very high proportions varying from 71 per cent in Lushai Hills and 66 per cent in Kamrup to not less than 35 per cent in Sibsagar. This class includes hawkers, street vendors otherwise unclassified (total number 1,900), dealers in drugs and chemical stores (843 only), general store keepers and shop keepers (45,886), proving conclusively that most of the commerce in Assam is not of the high-powered and highly organised variety as we come across in the industrialised cities of Bombay or Calcutta, but of the petty hawking variety.

## 334. Retail trade in foodstuffs (including beverages and narcotics) :

This is the second largest class under 'Commerce' in Assam containing 33 per cent of Division 6. It includes retail trade in grains and pulses, sweetmeats, sugar and spices, dairy products, eggs and poultry, tobacco, opium, ganja, pan, bidis and cigarettes. Selling of wine, liquors and aerated waters and hawkers and street vendors of drinks and foods come under this category. They together with retail trade otherwise unclassified account for 84 per cent of commerce in Assam. Sub-division 6.1 is almost equally important in all districts, no single district showing less than 20 per cent under it against 51 in Sibsagar, 46 in Darrang, and 40 in Lakhimpur.

## 335. Retail trade in Textile and Leather Goods :

This is the third largest sub-division under Commerce in the State, containing 7,059 *i.e.*, 6.6 per cent of self-supporting persons in the state engaged in Commerce. Only Lakhimpur returns a low percentage of 2.5. Nowgong and Sibsagar enjoy a small prominence. This sub-division includes hawkers and street vendors who trade in piece-goods, cotton, wool and silk wearing apparel, skin, leather, fur, feathers, made up textile goods, etc. It is even more important in the Assam Hills Division where it constitutes 9 per cent of all self-supporting persons in Division 6, rising to nearly 13 in the case of Naga Hills.

## SECTION XI

## DIVISION 7—TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS

## 336. Transport, Storage and Communications :

This Division is not very important in Assam as it supports only 4.1 per cent of the self-supporting persons under all industries and services in the State. The total number is only 40,140, (39,449 males and 691 females). Assam Plains account for 36,382 (35,771 males and 611 females) against Assam Hills Division 3,758 (3,678 males and 80 females). By far the largest and most important sub-division is railway transport (57 per cent) followed by transport by road (23 per cent) and transport by water (12 per cent). Together they account for over nine-tenths of all the self-supporting persons. The postal services account for another 5 per cent. The rest number as follows :—

Sub-Divn.	Services	Persons
7.0	Transport and communications otherwise unclassified and incidental services	308
7.3	Transport by air	232
7.5	Storage and Warehousing	102
7.7	Telegraph Services	335
7.8	Telephone Services	110
7.9	Wireless Services	77

They are all negligible each containing less than even 1 per cent of all the self-supporting persons in the Division. We can quickly dispose of them in a few lines. Transport by air shows a positive entry in all plains districts of Assam. In view of long distances between various district headquarters, especially between the industrial centre of Assam, which is Dibrugarh, and its actual and political capitals, which are Shillong and Gauhati, air transport has future in Assam. All these again are separated by long distances from Silchar which is entirely cut off from the rest of Assam except through a slender link by the Lumding Badarpur hill-section railway which goes out of action for months on during the rainy season, on account of numerous breeches or landslides on the hilly track. The inclusion of as many as 75 persons in Mishmi Hills under transport by air is due to some mistake in enumeration and/or tabulation.

## 337. Postal Services :

Postal services are particularly important in Cachar (9 per cent) in Assam Plains Division and the autonomous districts of Assam excepting United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district. They all return here over 16 to 50 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons in Division 7.

## 338. Telegraph Services :

Telegraph Services are equally unimportant in all districts excepting United K. & J. Hills, which is the headquarters of the Post and Telegraph Department in the State. Here it shows as high as 13 per cent.

Shillong, with its larger number of telephone connections, employs the largest staff among the districts of Assam for **telephone services** which explains why its percentage under telephone services is larger than that in any other district of Assam. The same explains its high percentage (3.4) under wireless services.

## 339. Railway Transport :

The communication system available to the State of Assam received a serious set back in August, 1947 due to the partition of the country. Assam's most important line of communication to the rest of India is to the port of Calcutta and in the pre-partition days it was reached both by rail and river navigation through East Bengal. With the partition of the country, both these routes assumed an international nature and there was the risk of these routes being cut off by unfavourable action on the part of the Government of Pakistan. In fact the risk was much greater than merely cutting off the communication with Calcutta as Assam's trunk routes connecting it with the rest of India by rail and road also lay through areas that constituted Pakistan.

The trade and commerce of Assam and in fact its very life thus became dependent on the goodwill of the Pakistan Railways for transporting their goods and passengers to and from the rest of India. And it was soon demonstrated that this risk was by no means of an academic nature

only. Towards the end of 1949, Pakistan Railways suddenly stopped all goods in transit over their railways to and from Assam. Minor pin-pricks had been felt earlier by the trade but December 1949 meant complete stoppage of the use of these routes.

These possibilities were clearly envisaged by the Railway Authorities and the Government of India. The latter, therefore, ordered that a rail link should be constructed between Assam and the rest of India passing entirely through Indian territory. A sum of Rs. 8.9 crores was sanctioned for the construction of this rail link and the work was started on 27th January, 1948. The construction of the link consisted of filling three major gaps, viz. :—

- (1) Connect Kishanganj with Bagrakote
- (2) Connect Madarihat with Hasimara,
- and (3) Connect Alipur-Duar with Fakiragram.

The Assam link was the spectacular side of the programme of the Indian Railways to meet the problems created for India by the partition of the country. But the problem did not rest there. By losing the portion of the old route to Pakistan we had lost—

- (i) The Hardinge Bridge; in the absence of that bridge, Indian Railways had to arrange for intensive work in regard to arrangements for crossing both passengers and goods over the Ganga at other alternative points.
- (ii) The large transport bundobust at Santahar and Parbatipur—The whole of Assam is served by metre gauge line of railways while Calcutta is served by broad gauge. At some point, therefore, goods have to be turned over from wagons of one gauge to another. Santahar and Parbatipur had been built at the cost of crores of rupees and decades of effort.
- (iii) The complete railway headquarters and engine shed at Lalmanirhat which was to run and serve the entire railway section in Assam north of the Brahmaputra.

To indicate the extent of these problems, only the last item which might appear to be the least formidable loss may be referred to here. The initial scheme sanctioned by the Railway Ministry for this purpose alone is expected to cost Rs. 1½ crores. More than one crore were already spent on this scheme before the end of the year 1951.

The highest priority was given by the Government of India for the construction of the rail link and the other projects involved in carrying the traffic to and from Assam by the All India route. Some idea of the difficulties of the construction of the Railway line known as the Link may be gauged by the fact that it involved construction of three major bridges over rivers just emerging out of their mountain gorges and undertook a total bridging of over 3 miles in the total new construction of about 143 miles.

All these works had made sufficient head-way and when Pak Railways stopped the transit of goods from one part of India to the other *via* their territory, goods trains started running at once by the All India rail route, the first train leaving Amingaon on 9th December 1949. Development was even more rapid after that. The Assam Rail Link Express went over the link route on Republic day, 26th January 1950, and by the end of 1951, 4 passenger trains each way and half a dozen goods trains each way were wending their path on the link route.

Though the link was established, yet a large amount of re-organisation was necessary for the smooth flow of the traffic on the new link. The railways have to maintain an intricate system of organisation for the transport of passengers and goods from place to place. The organisation that was existing before 15th August 1947 had its headquarters at Calcutta which by the new route was far away. A new headquarters organisation was, therefore, developed at Pandu near Gauhati. The district headquarters of the railway, located at Lalmonirhat which on partition fell in Pakistan territory, was now replaced at Alipur Duar in North Bengal.

There is no doubt whatever that here the Indian Railways had a tough job but they have discharged their responsibility with diligence and far-sightedness, and adequately met the challenge of the Partition.<sup>9</sup>



No account of Railway development in this State could be complete without a reference to the two major calamities, viz.—

- (i) the unprecedented floods in the month of June 1950 when the link was attacked by the Tista and the other smaller streams in the neighbourhood; and
- (ii) the great Assam earthquake of August 1950;

On both the occasions, however, repairs and construction started promptly and restoration of communications was as quick as possible.

Railway transport is naturally more important in Assam Plains Division (53 per cent) than in Assam Hills (37 per cent). Of all Plains districts of Assam, Darrang on the north bank of the Brahmaputra is least served by the railways, which explains its low figure (17 per cent) against 81 in Nowgong, 75 in Kamrup, 59 in Lakhimpur, Cachar showing 42. A section of the Assam Railway passing through Naga Hills near Dimapur is responsible for its 63 per cent under this Sub-Division. The entire hill section Badarpur to Lumding traverses the district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills; on top of this Haflong is the headquarters of some sections of the Assam Railway, resulting in its showing 95 per cent of all self-supporting persons in Division 7 here. The total number in Division 7 in Tirap Frontier Tract is so small, 14 only, that the presence of 12 persons on the fraction of the line which connects Margharita with Dibrugarh is responsible for the extremely high percentage of 85.

### 340. Transport by Road :

On account of the comparative absence of railway transport in Assam Hills Division, road transport enjoys some prominence in Assam Hills, 30 per cent against 22 per cent in the

Plains Division. In Assam Plains, Darrang, which suffers from lack of railway facilities, comes first with the highest percentage, 45 against 10 in Kamrup and 13 in Nowgong, the two districts in which railway transport predominates. Transport by road is particularly important in the United K. & J. Hills district, which has no railway but can boast of a fine organised system of State transport connecting Shillong with Gauhati and Sylhet in the pre-partition days. The latter bus connection now stops at Dawki, the Indian Union outpost on the Eastern frontier of India. The land-locked Garo Hills (55) and Lushai Hills (38) show a similar high percentage for road transport.

### 340A. Development of Roads Communications :

Development of roads and transport in Assam is a problem of very great importance as the future of the vast undeveloped areas in the state largely depends upon the means of communications. Table 5.38 gives the statement of road mileage maintained by the Public Works Department. A glance at this statement shows the tremendous increase in the total road mileage. Roads of all types show an increase, metalled mileage shows a decline from 236 in 1940 to 108 in 1950 because many of them have been black-topped. The same applies to the decline in the number of bridle path mileage because many of these bridle paths have been metalled and made jeepable. It will be noticed that the length of black-topped roads alone has increased by 523 miles. Similarly, there is an increase of 413 miles for gravel roads.

The condition of many roads in Assam is unfortunately deteriorating. This deterioration is mainly due to (i) increase in road transport and (ii) financial difficulties. Table 5.38 gives a statement showing the Motor Vehicles statistics during the year 1940-41 and 1950-51.

TABLE 5.38  
*Number of Motor Vehicles in Assam in 1941-42 and 1950-51*

Year	Motor Cycles	Private Cars	P. S. VEHICLES		Goods Vehicles	Miscellaneous	Total	
			Cabs	Others				
1941-42	..	145	2,408	265	571	901	85	4,375
1950-51	..	501	4,016	158	1,267	4,114	834	1,390

It will be seen that the motor vehicles have nearly doubled themselves during the decade. Figures of annual petrol consumption reveal a similar story.

Since 1st April, 1947, the inter-State Trunk Road system of India is termed the National Highway and its administrative control, and financial liability were taken over by the Government of India. Actual work of improvement and maintenance of the National Highway is, however, entrusted to the State Government who carry it out on behalf of the Government of India. The State Government meets the cost of improvement and maintenance of state roads out of the following sources :—(a) from normal revenues of the State, (b) allocations made to the states from the Central Petrol Tax Fund, (c) allocations made by the state from Motor Vehicles Tax and (d) the Tea Rates Road Fund, for roads in Tea producing areas. The total expenditure incurred on improvement of Road Communications by the State Public Works Department during the decade was Rs. 119.86 lakhs, of which Rs. 49.42 lakhs was received from Petrol Tax allocations. The expenditure on maintenance was Rs. 419.59 lakhs. The maintenance expenditure rose from 24.40 lakhs in 1941 to Rs. 50.80 lakhs in 1950.

#### 340B. War-time Development :

The beginning of the decade was also the beginning of World War II. By the end of 1941, the war spread to the Burma Front and gradually converted Assam, the Eastern Frontier Province into a battle field. The needs of defence stimulated rapid improvement of a large mileage of roads all over the province including many Local Board and municipal roads, which have since been taken over by the State Government for future upkeep. It is at this time that the arterial road system of Assam from Dhubri to Numaligarh via Goalpara and Gauhati and Numaligarh-Dimapur-Kohima-Imphal road with its extension via Palel to Tamu (India-Burma-border point) were widened for double way traffic, metalled and black-topped with consequent improvement of bridges. Another road from Makum to Lekapani was improved by the Defence Department on the same lines making a connection to the historic Stillwell Road. The expenditure in connection with these improvement of roads for war purposes was borne by the Government of India.

#### 340C. Post-War Development Programme :

By the time the war came to an end, a five year plan of road improvement and construction was conceived by the Government of India and finalised at a conference of Chief Engineers at Nagpur. This is known as the "Nagpur Plan", subsequently termed as Post War Development programme. The plan originally aimed at connecting every village with a network of road system so that no populated area would be more than 5 miles from the nearest road.

Assam's post-war development programme aimed at developing 525 miles of district roads and 1,400 miles of village roads including strengthening or reconstruction of existing bridges and construction of about 225 new bridges of 100 ft. span and over at the revised estimated cost of Rs. 7.6 crores on the basis of prevailing rates in 1948.

Work was started on 1,040 miles of roads of which 650 miles were Local Board roads taken for improvement. By the end of 1948-49 construction of 78 miles of new roads and improvement of 132 miles of existing road and building of 4 major bridges were completed, while works on other lengths of roads were at various stages of progress.

The expenditure incurred was Rs. 154.65 lakhs. At this stage the Post War grants by the Government of India from which the Road Improvement Programme was being financed were curtailed and further work had to be stopped. During 1950-51, 610 miles of these half done roads were taken up for completion under a fresh programme for Rs. 57 lakhs financed from the Central road fund allocation to the State.

With the partition of India in 1947 leading to the separation of Sylhet from Assam the road communication through Indian territory between the Surma Valley (Cachar and Lushai Hill Districts) and the rest of Assam was cut off. Similarly part of the road link connecting Assam with the rest of India went to East Pakistan. In order to re-establish these disrupted road communication through Indian territories the following road projects were urgently taken up. A 220 miles long Hill Road from Shillong to Silchar via Jowai and Haflong was constructed at a cost of Rs. 130 lakhs. The cost was borne in the ratio of 2:1 by the Central and the State Government. By the

time the formation was cut and the road became negotiable by jeeps, further work on this road was, however, stopped and an alternative shorter road alignment from Shillong to Badarpur via Jowai was selected. Work on the 80 mile Hill Road estimated to cost Rs. 90 lakhs has already been started. From Badarpur good roads exist upto Silchar on the east and Karimganj on the west. This new road will thus connect the Lushai Hills-Cachar and the State of Tripura with Shillong. The missing link in National Highway has also been restored through Cooch Behar covering a length of about 16 miles.

#### 340D. Improvement of roads in Backward Areas :

A programme of road development in the autonomous districts of Assam is being financed by the Government of India in terms of article 275 of the Constitution of India. Works on three roads, one in each of United K. & J. Hills, Lushai Hills and Naga Hills is already in progress, while schemes and estimates for roads in Garo Hills, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills are under preparation. The programme will roughly cost Rs. 150 lakhs.

#### 340E. Works in States of Tripura and Manipur :

At the request of the Government of India, the Assam Government have also undertaken construction of a road from Agartala to Assam border. The road will be 130 miles long with

a branch road 5 miles long. The road has been thrown open to jeep traffic but remains to be metalled and provided with permanent bridges.

The Government of Assam have also undertaken on behalf of the Government of India maintenance of the road from Palel to Tamu (Burma border) and construction of a new 75 mile Hill Road joining Tamenglong to mile 106 of the Dimapur-Imphal Road.

#### 340E. State Transport :

In pursuance of the policy of nationalisation of road transport enunciated and adopted as early as on 27th September, 1948, the Government of Assam decided to bring about 642 miles of motor routes under official operation. Nationalisation began on the 16th January, 1951, and the government have taken over till 31st March, 1951 for official operation, a total mileage of 342 miles at an estimated cost of over Rs. 20 lakhs. In the budget for 1951-52, provision was made for taking over another 136 miles of routes namely, the Nowgong-Silghat sub-section (36 miles) and the Gauhati-Goalpara (100 miles) road with effect from 1st April, 1952 at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.1 lakhs and Rs. 5.6 lakhs respectively, thereby completing the nationalisation of 478 miles of roads. Government are taking over Dhubri-Jogighopa road with effect from 1st September, 1952 at an estimated cost of Rs. 9.3 lakhs, thereby bringing another 80 miles under official operation.

TABLE 5.39

*Road mileage maintained by Assam P.W.D.*

(1)	Total length in miles (2)	Black topped miles (3)	Metalled miles (4)	Gravelled miles (5)	Earth miles (6)	Bridle path miles (7)	NATIONAL HIGHWAYS IN		REMARKS (10)
							Assam (miles) (8)	Manipur (miles) (9)	
1940	.. 4,920.1	389.9	236.9	1,281.4	712.6	2,299.3	..	..	
1941	.. 5,021.2	475.1	155.9	1,345.7	670.9	2,373.6	..	..	
1942	.. 4,852.4	449.5	113.7	1,397.2	615.2	2,286.8	..	..	National Highways as such came into existence on 1st April, 1948. Therefore columns 8 and 9 are blank for 1940 to 1947. For 1948-49 and 50, the figures given in column 2 are inclusive of the figures shown in columns 8 & 9.
1943	.. 4,611.3	384.6	99.4	1,282.0	619.8	2,225.5	..	..	
1944	.. 5,056.7	602.1	100.7	1,345.3	704.3	2,304.3	..	..	
1945	.. 5,150.5	624.8	95.7	1,456.1	675.6	2,298.3	..	..	
1946	.. 5,495.1	830.5	101.0	1,638.4	685.3	2,239.9	..	..	
1947	.. 5,334.8	884.1	87.3	1,420.7	886.7	2,076.0	..	..	
1948	.. 6,003.8	918.3	79.4	1,622.2	1,282.6	2,101.3	802.60	98.00	
1949	.. 6,049.0	903.2	96.9	1,766.2	1,250.2	2,032.5	801.60	98.00	
1950	.. 6,236.6	913.1	108.0	1,695.1	1,410.1	1,210.3	801.60	98.00	

The figures given above showing the development of road transport during the last 10 years indicate that if finances and fuel are available, this type of transport will rapidly develop in the State. Roads are a great national asset, as they are not only a means of communications but also a great insurance against the ravages of shortages, floods and epidemics.

#### 341. Transport by Water :

Transport by water is far more important in Assam Plains (13 per cent) than in Assam Hills (5 per cent). In the plains is the mighty Brahmaputra flowing right through the centre of the Brahmaputra valley; the Barak does the same in Cachar. The Brahmaputra is navigable right upto Pasighat, Dibrugarh and Sadiya throughout the year which makes it the national highway

of Assam cheap, never failing and involving practically no maintenance cost. Water transport is most important in Darrang in which nearly one-third of all self-supporting persons in Division 7 are included; Goalpara (27 per cent) and Cachar (18 per cent) with its fine network of inland waterways come next. Water transport is of very little significance in Nowgong (2 per cent) as also in the hills districts except Lushai Hills where for a considerable part of the year, shallow streams and rivers are navigable, carrying goods and passengers to distant hill villages. Abor Hills return the highest percentage of all (47) because the Brahmaputra is the sole means of access in this distant area up to the headquarters of Assam's Saw Mills, from which considerable amount of timber is flown down to Brahmaputra to all Plains districts of Assam except Cachar.

## SECTION XII

### DIVISION 8—HEALTH, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

#### 342. Health, Education and Public Administration :

Division 8, *i.e.*, Health, Education and Public Administration ranks fourth among all the divisions of the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme. Division O (Primary Industries not elsewhere specified), Division 9 (Services not elsewhere specified) and Division 6 (Commerce) are the only three divisions which surpass it. With a total of 52,731 (48,872 males and 3,859 females) it contains 5.4 per cent of self-supporting persons engaged in all industries and services in Assam. The number for Assam Plains division is 33,057 (30,346 males and 2,711 females) against 19,674 (18,526 males and 1,148 females) in the Hills Division. Thus, Division 8 is relatively much smaller in Assam Plains, ranking sixth among the ten Divisions, with only a percentage of 3.7, due to its slightly developed industries, especially tea which employs relatively

far larger numbers of self-supporting persons. In the Assam Hills Division where tea industry is absent, Division 8 shoots into great prominence returning over one fourth (26.4 per cent) of self-supporting persons in all industries and services, and ranks a very close second to Division 9 with its 28 per cent, being far greater than Division O (14.1) and Division 6 (13). Division 8 is of special prominence in Kamrup (7.8 per cent) and Nowgong (7.9 per cent) against less than 2 per cent in Lakhimpur. Autonomous districts with the exception of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills show very high proportions under this Division varying from 21 per cent in Garo Hills to 26 in United K. & J. Hills, 32 in Nowgong Hills and 50 in Lushai Hills. Division 8 is small in the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, as the government servants in this district mostly belong to the railway and are returned under Division 7.

The total numbers and percentage distribution of self-supporting persons among the various sub-divisions are given below :—

Sub-Divn.	Services	Persons	Percentage
8.2	Educational services and research	13,832	26.2
8.7	Employees of the State Government	13,287	25.2
8.3 } 8.8 } 8.9 }	Employees of the Union Government including those of non-Indian Governments	9,475	18
8.1	Medical and health services	8,058	15.3
8.4	Police other than village watchmen	5,977	11.1
8.5	Village officers and servants including village watchmen	1,305	2.5
8.6	Employees of the municipalities and local boards	897	1.7
Divn. 8—	Health Education and Public Administration	52,731	100

We can easily ignore the village officers and servants including village watchmen, who number only 1,305, forming 2.5 per cent of all self-supporting persons in this Division. The employees of the Municipalities and local boards number even less, *i.e.*, 897 forming only 1.7 per cent. This small number, of course, does not include scavengers, whom we have already considered in Division 5—Construction and Utilities, sub-division 5.7 *i.e.*, sanitary works and services including scavengers.

#### 343. Police other than Village Watchmen :

They number only 5,877, *i.e.*, 11.1 per cent of all self-supporting persons in Division 8. Their small number shows what a fine job is being done by relatively few numbers in maintaining law and order in this State with its vast distances, made more inaccessible by numerous hills, valleys, rivers and marshes.

**It is to be clearly noted that sub-division 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8 exclude all Government servants classifiable under any other division or sub-division.**

#### 344. Medical and Health Services :

Sub-division 8.1 (Medical and Health Services) employs 15 per cent of all self-supporting per-

sons in the State engaged in Health, Education and Public Administration; the percentage is 22 in Assam Plains against 5 in Assam Hills, clearly showing much greater medical and health facilities in Assam Plains than in the Hills. All autonomous districts except the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills (16.5) return percentages below 6 whereas in the plains districts the relative figures are in no case less than 17, as in Darrang, rising to 20 in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur and 30 in Cachar.

#### 345. Educational Services and Research :

Sub-division 8.2 (Educational services and research) has 13,032 self-supporting persons or about 26 per cent of all included under Division 8. The backwardness of the Hills Division is shown up by its far lower percentage (13) against 34 in Assam Plains. Kamrup with its recently founded Gauhati University has the largest relative proportion, 39 per cent, against backward Nowgong (30). Autonomous districts have generally their due share of educational services. Among them the lowest percentage is given by the United K. & J. Hills (7); this may appear somewhat surprising, but it should not be taken to mean that this district is not well served with educational institutions; on the contrary, it enjoys very good educational facilities in this respect and has a larger overall number (879) than any other autonomous district. The simple explanation is that this number has been overwhelmed by the much greater ones of the employees of the State Government and Union Government which are far greater in the headquarters district of the State.

#### 346. Employees of State Government :

25 per cent of all self-supporting persons in this Division are state employees excluding those who are already classified under any other Division or sub-division according to their own more specialised jobs. The percentage under Assam Hills Division (35) is nearly one and half times than in Assam Plains (20). The United K. & J. Hills District is right on the top with 45 per cent of self-supporting persons in the whole division included under this sub-division against 10 in Naga Hills and 9 each in Sibsagar and Cachar.

### 347. Employees of Union and non-Indian Governments :

Sub-divisions 8.3, 8.8 and 8.9 form 18 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons in Division 8 in Assam; the relative proportion falls below 6 per cent in Assam Plains against 39 in Assam Hills. I believe there is some mistake in tabulation; otherwise there is no reason why Darrang

and Nowgong should return as high as 11 and 10 per cent, respectively, as Union Government servants. The United K. & J. Hills which contains most of the offices of Central Government in Assam returns 36 per cent which is equally high in Garo Hills (32) and far higher in Naga Hills (45). This is mainly because of the men of Assam Rifles in these districts are under the Central Government; they are included here and not under the Police.

## SECTION XIII

### DIVISION 9—SERVICES NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED

#### 348. Services not elsewhere specified :

Total number 142,369 (123,499 males and 18,870 females). This miscellaneous Division is actually the second largest in Assam, containing nearly 15 per cent of self-supporting persons engaged in all industries and services in the State, and is next only to Division O-Primary Industries not elsewhere specified. This Division is far larger in Assam Hills (28 per cent) than in the Plains (14 per cent). Goalpara (34) and Kamrup (31) contain the largest proportion of persons in this sub-division against Lakhimpur (5) and Sibsagar (7). In the districts of Assam Hills Division, the United K. & J. Hills turns out the largest proportion, (32) against 9 in the Lushai Hills.

Percentage distribution of the self-supporting persons of this Division into its more important sub-divisions is as follows :—

Sub-Divn.	Services	Persons	Percentage
9.0	Services otherwise unclassified.	92,115	65
9.1	Domestic services.	27,371	19
9.8	Religious, Charitable and Welfare services.	6,759	5
9.2	Barbers and Beauty shops.	4,901	3.4
9.4	Hotels, restaurants and eating houses.	4,299	3

Other sub-divisions, *e.g.*, 9.3—Laundry and Laundry Services (total 2,555, *i.e.*, 1.8 per cent), P. 42—37.

9.5—Recreation services (total 979, *i.e.*, 0.7 per cent), 9.6—Legal and Business Services (total 3,106, *i.e.*, 2.2 per cent) and 9.7—Arts, Letters and Journalism (total 290, *i.e.*, 0.2 per cent) are almost negligible. Only 979 persons are employed in Recreation services, *i.e.*, production and distribution of motion pictures, operation of cinemas and allied services, managers and employees of theatres, opera companies, etc., musicians, actors, dancers, etc., conjurers, exhibitors of wild animals and radio broadcasting studios. This miscellaneous group, which caters to the amusements, entertainment and recreation of the people is yet of very little importance in Assam. Similarly, sub-division 9.7, *i.e.*, Arts, Letters and Journalism, which includes artists, sculptors and image makers as well as authors, editors and journalists number only 290 showing how small is the ground covered by modern arts, letters and journalism; actually authors, editors and journalists in Assam number only 70, of whom 2 are females; of course two are better than none! 59 are in the Assam Plains Division against 11 in the Hills. A small number of persons, 3,106 in the legal and business services illustrates the small number of law courts and lawyers. The Assamese peasant is not as addicted to the costly and ruinous pastime of law suits as his counterpart in some other Indian states. There are only 1,161 lawyers and mukhtars, including kazis and law agents, while a further 754 are returned as their clerks, petition writers, etc. The number of

architects, surveyors, engineers and their employees, who are not in the service of the State, is only 228, a pointer to the low building activities in the state, where stately mansions cannot be built due not merely to lack of financial resources but also the ever-present threat of the earthquakes. Managers, clerks and other employees of associations, organisations of employers or labours are as few as 849.

#### 349. **Services otherwise unclassified :**

Sub-division 9.0—Services otherwise unclassified, contains 65 per cent of the total number of self-supporting persons in the State engaged in Services not elsewhere specified. The percentages are 64 in Assam Plains and 68 in Assam Hills. Goalpara (78) returns the highest percentage of any district in Assam against Lakhimpur (31) which is the lowest among all Plains and autonomous districts except Lushai Hills (30.6). This sub-division includes persons of unclassified as well vaguely described professions; e.g., “Kamla” or “Mazdoors” (workers who have not given their place of work or the nature of their actual occupation). Astrologers, fortune tellers, etc., are also included in this category.

#### 350. **Domestic Services :**

Sub-division 9.1—Domestic Services, provides employment for 27,371 self-supporting persons or about 19 per cent of those under Division 9. Lakhimpur turns out the highest proportion, 38.6 per cent against less than 12 per cent of Cachar. While considering the percentages of various districts given in Subsidiary Table 5.7, the absolute numbers given in the District Index of Non-Agricultural Occupations should be borne in mind. Thus although the percentage in Nowgong is over 17 and in Cachar only 12, the actual number of these domestic servants is 1,613 and 3,061 respectively.

#### 351. **Religious, Charitable and Welfare Services :**

The total number is 6,759 (5,997 males and 762 females) forming 5 per cent of all self-sup-

porting persons in this Division. The number of priests, ministers, monks, nuns, sadhus, mendicants and other religious workers predominates this sub-division, and is as high as 5,794, whereas another 75 are returned as servants in religious edifices, burial and burning grounds, pilgrim conductors and circumcisors, etc. A small number 585 (501 males and 84 females) are employed as managers and employees of organisations and institutions rendering charitable and other welfare services. The largest number under this sub-division is naturally found in Kamrup (2,414) with its large religious endowments and also due to its being the headquarters of the Maha-purusha sect at BARPETA, which enables it to return for this sub-division as large a percentage as 9 against 2 per cent in Goalpara and Darrang. The very high percentages of 42 and 11 in Lushai Hills and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills simply mask small actual numbers, 160 and 104, while the United K. & J. Hills District which returns a percentage of less than 2 has as many as 284; hence, here as well as in all other sub-divisions percentage figures should be duly checked against their actual numbers.

#### 352. **Barbers and Beauty Shops :**

Sub-division 9.2, *i.e.*, Barbers and Beauty Shops, is comparatively more prominent in Assam Plains Division (3.8) than in Assam Hills Division (1.2). Barbers and Beauty Shops seem to prefer Sibsagar for their location (total number is 978, *i.e.*, 7 per cent) to all other districts of Assam; here too as we have seen above, the actual number in Cachar is larger (1,072), though it forms only 4.1 per cent of this Division.

#### 353. **Hotels, Restaurants and Eatings Houses :**

Assam Plains have a greater proportion (3.3 per cent) than the Assam Hills (1.5 per cent). Lakhimpur seems to have more than its due share of hotels and restaurants, 7.8 per cent against only 2 in Nowgong.



## SECTION XIV

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

354. **Concluding Remarks :**

As indicated in the introductory chapter, no confident comparison can be made between the classification of means of livelihood made in 1931 and that at the 1951 Census. The difficulty of this comparison would be clear from Subsidiary Table 5.6. It will be seen from this Table that earners and working dependants as classified in the 1931 census together accounted for 50.2 per cent of the population, while self-supporting persons and earning dependants at the 1951 Census together account for only 43.1 per cent of the population. The corresponding percentages in Madras for the two Censuses were 55 and 31 per cent of the population. At the 1931 census, the population was classified under three categories, viz., earners, working dependants and non-working dependants. By 'earner' was meant a person making a regular individual contribution for the upkeep of the household of which he was a member. He need not be self-supporting or actually working with his body or mind, or have a money income. Persons who had some earnings, but had no regular source of income, were treated as working dependants. The non-working dependants of 1931, thus correspond to our non-earning dependants, and we should expect the total of the earners and working dependants of 1931 to correspond to the total of our self-supporting persons and earning dependants, but as has just been mentioned, the figures do not bear out this comparison. The changes in the groupings of the means of livelihood, emphasis on a strict definition of self-supporting persons, treating of tea industry under Industries and Services against its inclusion in agriculture in 1931 and the partition of Sylhet all have involved far-reaching changes which make a comparison of the figures of the two censuses of doubtful utility.

In this Chapter, I have specified some cases which clearly indicate some vagaries in enumeration or classification. The enumeration of the means of livelihood and economic status are the most difficult part of the enumeration at the 1951 Census. They were always found difficult, whereas we have introduced further refinements at the present Census. The questions relating to 'means of livelihood' raise many conundrums

and subtleties; sometimes they cannot be correctly understood and accurately applied by the average enumerator; it is not always an easy task to explain these questions to illiterate persons and get correct answers from them. Yet, on the whole, I can confidently assert that the vagaries referred to above have not resulted in any serious errors, and that the results of the enumeration of the means of livelihood and economic status conducted at the 1951 Census, such as they are, have been extremely valuable and really worthwhile. They give as accurate a picture of the economic life of the community as is possible under present circumstances. Further, in order to extract maximum benefit from this complicated series of operations with their enumeration groups, groups and refinements, it is imperative and in every way desirable that we should adhere to the present divisions and sub-divisions of the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme, until we have obtained truly comparable data over a number of periodical censuses.

In the preceding Sections while discussing individual occupations, divisions and sub-divisions, we have seen how the numbers employed in them are a reflection of the backward economy of the state. A tremendous lot will have to be done before the vast natural resources of Assam are properly organised and harnessed to subserve socially desirable ends. The Government of Assam in a memorandum to the Royal Commission on Labour in India (1929) stated :—

"Assam is not an industrial province. It is an agricultural province with no large towns or industrial centres. Its largest and most important industry, tea cultivation, is mainly agricultural. Apart from the tea industry, the only large labour concerns are the coal mines and oil fields and a match factory. There are a few scattered saw mills, rice mills, oil mills, engineering workshops and printing presses, but they are small and of little importance in this province. Secondly, as an agricultural province with land still available for settlement and no pressure of population, Assam has practically no indigenous industrial classes. There is, of course, some indigenous casual labour, both skilled and unskilled, in the small towns and villages, to meet

the ordinary needs of the people, viz., agricultural labourers, porters, carpenters, black-smiths, etc., but for the industries of importance labour has to be imported from other parts of India. The main difficulty which industry in Assam has to face is the labour supply, and the labour employed is a heterogeneous mixture of races and creeds drawn from almost every part of India."

This picture with minor modifications is broadly true even today after a lapse of over 20 years. The industrial picture is indeed not very different though the pressure of population is giving rise to an indigenous landless labour class to which we shall refer in some detail in Appendix 8. The main important industry in the State, viz., tea is now mainly dependent on home labour, though a certain amount of immigration is yet steadily going on as we have seen in Chapter I Section IV.

### 355. Proportion of non-agricultural population; its primary and secondary economic status :

In this Chapter, we have reviewed at length the distribution of the non-agricultural population, the nature and extent of dependency amongst them and their secondary economic status, viz., their sub-division as employers, employees and independent workers. We notice that 26.7 per cent of the population of Assam belongs to non-agricultural classes. Corresponding percentage for India as a whole is 30 and we have, therefore, comparatively a smaller proportion of population in non-agricultural classes than is the case for the country as a whole.

Amongst the non-agricultural classes, as large a proportion as 63 per cent are economically idle and do nothing. Only 6 per cent amongst them are earning dependants and 31 per cent are self-supporting persons. Out of the 63 per cent of the economically idle people, if we deduct persons below 15 and aged 55 and above, we still get a fairly large number of young men and women belonging to the non-agricultural classes who have no income whatsoever and who do not contribute to the pool of national production.

We have also seen in the State the category of employers constitutes only 1 per cent self-supporting persons of non-agricultural population

whereas exactly three-fourths, i.e., 75 per cent are employees and 22 per cent independent workers. A small percentage, viz., 2 belong to the residuary category, i.e., "others".

### 356. Territorial distribution of all Industries and Services as a whole :

We have already examined in detail the distribution of proportions of self-supporting persons in each of the 10 divisions of the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme. It will not be out of place to recall here that Livelihood Class V covers 5 out of these 10 divisions of all Industries and Services, viz.

Division 'O'	Primary industries not elsewhere specified, such as stock-raising, plantation, forestry, hunting, fishing, etc.,
Division '1'	Mining and quarrying;
Division '2'	Processing and manufacture of food-stuffs, textiles, leather and products thereof;
Division '3'	Processing and manufacture of metals, chemicals and products thereof;
Division '4'	Processing and manufacture not elsewhere specified, such as bricks, tiles and other structural clay products; cement, cement pipes and other cement products; non-metallic mineral products like pots, earthenware, bangles, etc.

The total number of persons belonging to Livelihood Class V (production other than cultivation), in the State is 1,327,551 or about 55 per cent of all the people belonging to the non-agricultural classes.

Livelihood Class VI consists of just one division 6 under all Industries and Services with a total population of 355,066, i.e., 15 per cent of all the people belonging to the non-agricultural classes.

Livelihood Class VII corresponds to sub-divisions 7.1 to 7.4 of division 7. Total numbers in this Livelihood Class are 115,569, i.e., 5 per cent of all the people belonging to the non-agricultural classes.

Lastly, Livelihood Class VIII is the residuary category, containing all the divisions and sub-divisions not already included in Livelihood Classes V, VI or VII. It includes all the other non-agricultural Services and Industries as well as all miscellaneous non-agricultural occupations and includes :—

Division 5 Construction and utilities;

Division 7 Storage and warehousing,  
Sub-divisions Postal Services, Telegraph  
7.5 to 7.9 and Services, Telephone Services,  
sub-division Wireless Services, also trans-  
7.0 port and communications other-  
wise unclassified and in inci-  
dental services;

Division 8 Health, Education and Public  
Administration; and

Division 9 Services not elsewhere specified.

It also includes other miscellaneous sources of livelihood e.g. income from investments, pensions and family remittances, proceeds of begging and other sources of income of economically inactive persons. These are not included in Economic Table No. III, which is limited to Industries and Services. Hence there will be a difference to this extent between the total self-supporting persons of the non-agricultural classes in Economic Table No. I and the Economic Table No. III. The reconciliation is effected by entries on the flyleaf of Economic Table No. III.

Livelihood Class VIII numbers a total of 614,529 persons, *i.e.*, exactly one-fourth or 25 per cent of the total non-agricultural population.

### 357. Distribution of Industries and Services in Assam and the Natural Divisions :

The total number of self-supporting persons in the State depending on industries and services is 973,908 (710,573 males and 263,335 females). Their total and percentage distribution in the Natural Divisions is specified below in Table 5.40.

TABLE 5.40

*Distribution of persons in All Industries and Services in Assam and its Natural Divisions*

State and Natural Division	Persons	Percentage
Assam	973,908	100
Assam Plains	899,390	92
Assam Hills	74,518	8
Manipur	25,944	100
Tripura	48,695	100

From the above Table we find that Assam Plains which has 86.3 of the total population of the State, have more than its due share, *viz.*, 92 per cent of self-supporting persons engaged in Industries and Services. Assam Hills with 13.7 per cent of the total population has only 8 per cent. The better position in Assam Plains is due to its relatively larger industrialisation (tea gardens in the Plains) and its absence from the Assam Hills Division.

### 358. Distribution of All Industries and Services by Divisions in Assam :

Table 5.41 below gives an analysis of self-supporting persons engaged in All Industries and Services according to their distribution into different Divisions 0 to 9, in terms of percentage as well as total numbers.

TABLE 5.41

*Distribution of All Industries and Services by Divisions in Assam*

Division No.	Description of Division	Persons	Percentage
0	Primary Industries not elsewhere specified	534,621	54.9
1	Mining and Quarrying	5,381	0.5
2	Processing and Manufacture—Foodstuffs, textiles, leather and products thereof	25,434	2.8
3	Processing and manufacture—Metals, Chemicals and Products thereof	16,655	1.7
4	Processing and manufacture—not elsewhere specified	38,006	3.9
5	Construction and Utilities	12,278	1.2
6	Commerce	106,293	10.9
7	Transport, Storage and Communications	40,140	4.1
8	Health, Education and Public Administration	52,731	5.4
9	Services not elsewhere specified	142,369	14.6
	Total	973,908	100

Leaving out Division 9, which contains the miscellaneous services not elsewhere specified, the two most important divisions are; Division 0, Primary Industries not elsewhere specified and Division 6, Commerce. Next comes Division 8, Health, Education and Public Administration, with 5.4 per cent, followed by Division 7, Transport, Storage and Communications (4.1) and Division 4, Processing and manufacture not elsewhere specified, (3.9). There is, therefore, no doubt regarding the overwhelming importance of Primary Industries not elsewhere specified which alone contains nearly 55 per cent of the entire number of self-supporting persons, supported by Industries and Services in Assam. Contrast this with Madhya Pradesh where the percentage is as low as 9.2.

### 359. Distribution of All Industries and Services in Natural Divisions by Divisions :

Table 5.42 gives the percentage distribution of self-supporting persons of all Industries and Services in the Natural Divisions. The pattern of their distribution in Assam Plains is almost identical with that prevailing in the State, but Assam Hills differs in several respects from both of them :—

TABLE 5.42

*Percentage distribution of Self-supporting Persons of All Industries and Services by Divisions in Natural Divisions*

Division No.	Assam Plains	Assam Hills	Manipur	Tripura
0	58.3	14.1	5.3	16.5
1	.5	1.8	1.2	-
2	2.5	3.7	24.9	8.3
3	1.8	1.2	1.5	1.3
4	3.8	4.7	9.4	3.8
5	1.2	2.0	1.7	.2
6	10.7	13.0	24.7	25.5
7	4.0	5.0	3.4	2.2
8	3.7	26.4	14.8	9.1
9	13.5	28.1	13.1	33.1
Total	1000.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Division 0, Primary Industries not elsewhere specified**, is of even greater importance in Assam Plains than in the State as a whole, showing 58.3 per cent against 54.9 per cent in Assam. Another interesting feature is Division 8, Health, Education and Public Administration. In Assam Plains its percentage is 3.7, which does not differ considerably from the percentage (5.4) of self-supporting persons in this Division in the whole State. In Assam Hills, however, the position is considerably at variance with that in

the State as a whole or in Assam Plains Division.

In Assam Hills, we do not notice the overwhelming predominance of any particular Division such as of Division 0 in Assam and Assam Plains. Division 9, *i.e.*, Services not elsewhere specified, which is the second largest Division in Assam and Assam Plains (14 per cent) forms the largest Division in Assam Hills with 28.1 per cent. It does not exceed considerably the second largest Division 8 (26.4 per cent). Next to Division 8 is Division 0, Primary Industries not elsewhere specified (14.1), and then comes Division 6, Commerce (13.0). Other Divisions in the descending order of importance are 4, 2, 5, 1 and 3.

### 360. Distribution of Industries and Services—Districtwise—Salient Features :

**Division 0, Primary Industries not elsewhere specified**, is an overwhelming group in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, forming 74 and 77 per cent, respectively, of all Industries and Services. It maintains this primacy in Darrang (67 per cent) and Cachar (57 per cent). In the purely agricultural districts of Goalpara, United K. and J. Hills and Kamrup, Division 0 does not contain more than 14, 15 and 7 per cent, respectively. In Assam Hills, this Division is important in the United K. & J. Hills (15 per cent) and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills (12 per cent).

**Division 1, Mining and Quarrying**, is utterly insignificant except in Lakhimpur (1.4 per cent) and Naga Hills (7.5 per cent). These are the two districts in which coal is mined; in addition to it oil is also worked in Lakhimpur.

**Division 2, Processing and Manufacture—Food-stuffs, Textiles, Leather and Products thereof**, is of small importance except in Kamrup (7.8 per cent) and Garo Hills (8.0 per cent). Contrast its percentage of 2.8 in Assam with that in Madras, which is as high as 18.

**Division 3, Processing and Manufacture—Metals, Chemicals and Products thereof**, can be easily ignored, as it never attains a larger percentage than in Goalpara (3.8 per cent).

**Division 4, Processing and Manufacture—not elsewhere specified**, is of some significance in Goalpara (8.5 per cent), Kamrup (7.1 per cent) and Garo Hills (6.0 per cent).

**Division 5, Construction and Utilities**, is relatively most important in the Lushai Hills (7.3 per cent).

**Division 6, Commerce**, plays a very important part in the economic life of Goalpara and Kamrup, where it contains nearly one-fourth of the total number of self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services. In the Hill Districts it is of very great significance, Garo Hills supporting as high as 30 per cent.

**Division 7, Transport, Storage and Communications**, is of some significance only in Kamrup (11 per cent) and Nowgong (9.0 per cent). Naga and Lushai Hills in Assam Hills Division each return 9 per cent under this. It supports over one-fourth of the total number of self-supporting persons in United Mikir and North Cachar Hills. The proportion rises to one-half in the case of Lushai Hills and in Naga Hills.

**Division 8, Health Education and Public Administration**, is not of any particular significance in Assam Plains supporting as it does, only 3.7 per cent of its members under Industries and Services. It has some importance for Kamrup and Nowgong, each of which returns about 8 per cent, but a mere glance at Subsidiary Table 5.7 will prove beyond any doubt how important Division 8 is for all autonomous districts.

**Division 9, Services not elsewhere specified**, is the second largest class in Assam Hills Division and its individual autonomous districts except Lushai Hills (which alone among them shows only 9.2 per cent here). It accounts for nearly 32 and 30 per cent of the total self-supporting persons in United K. & J. Hills and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, respectively.

### 361. Rural-urban break-up of Self-Supporting Persons in all Industries and Services by Divisions In Assam :

Table 5.43 gives the rural and urban break-up of self-supporting persons in all Industries and Services by Divisions for the State :—

TABLE 5.43

*Rural and urban break-up of all Industries and Services by Divisions in Assam*

Division No.	Percentage of self-supporting persons in the Division	
	Rural areas	Urban areas
0	62.8	1.9
1	0.6	0.1
2	2.2	5.1
3	1.4	3.8
4	3.6	6.2
5	1.0	3.1
6	8.7	25.6
7	3.4	9.0
8	3.8	16.6
9	12.5	28.5
Total	100.0	100.0

We discover a vast contrast in Division 0—Primary Industries not elsewhere specified in rural and urban areas. These primary industries, meaning mainly tea plantations, are mainly in rural areas which account for the overwhelming percentage of 62.8 against 1.9 in the urban areas of Assam. Division 6, *i.e.*, Commerce, which shows only 8.7 in rural areas against 25.6 in the urban presents another striking contrast. Thereafter we notice Division 8, Health, Education and Public Administration, which is only 3.8 per cent in the rural and 16.6 in the urban areas. Division 9—Services not elsewhere specified, containing 12.5 per cent in rural areas has as much as 28.5 per cent in the urban areas.

### 362. Importance of small industries in Assam :

Our survey of the industrial scene in Assam conforms the conclusion to which Lloyd arrived at more than 30 years ago, *viz.*, "Assam is not an **El Dorado**. Apart from agriculture and tea, industry is of little account." These words are more true today than when they were written in 1921 and should compel us to give our maximum attention to the small, unorganised home industries in villages and the necessity of organising them on sound business lines by improving the traditional skill of our village artisans and by adopting modern improvements in techniques, raw material, implements, marketing and finance organization and modern methods of transport and communications. We may not go so far as to adopt in its entirety the faith of persons like Shri J. C. Kumarappa for whom spinning and wearing of **khadi** is not merely a matter of discipline but a way of life which aims to make one's practical every day relationship with our village men conform to the ideal of non-violence and truth which is the basis of Gandhian construction programme. Yet we cannot but accept the basic economic truth of this ideology, *viz.*, the emphasis on cottage industries. The greatest handicaps from which village industries suffer is the utter resourcelessness of the village artisan. Being unorganised he is unable to stand against the competition from his resourceful and organised rivals from the urban areas. The financial structure as well as credit policy of modern organised banking, discriminating railway freight policy and structure over a long stretch

of years and the capitalistic marketing organisation all favour the working of large scale production to the detriment to his interests. The need for modernising and reorganising our cottage industries, is nearly as great as that of modernising and reorganising our greatest cottage industry, viz., Agriculture. If the village cobbler uses aluminium vessels and the village potter cheap machine-made Bata shoes, it requires no great power of imagination to conceive that both will become extinct in course of time on account of lack of markets for their home-made wares.

The problems of cottage industries are many, varied and complex and no easy or readymade solutions are applicable to all of them. What is required is patience and thorough study of each cottage industry in the context of its present setting and environment and the adoption by the State, society and individual artisans themselves a determined policy to keep alive and rejuvenate our cottage industries, without which increasing dependance on agriculture, de-industrialisation and greater ruralisation will be the inevitable results, which will lead to further depressing the already depressed condition of our agriculture and the low standard of living of our peasantry. As the Planning Commission observes\*, "Village industries have a central place in rural development programmes. Diminishing opportunities for gainful employment account to some extent for the reduction in the standard of life of some sections of the rural population. Products of large-scale industries have increasingly limited the market for several classes of artisans. Their occupations now give them only partial employment, so that they tend to join the ranks of agricultural workers. Development outside the rural sector has not been rapid enough to arrest the increasing pressure of population on the land. The development of village industries should, therefore, be as much a matter of State action as the increase of agricultural production. Indeed, one cannot be separated from the other, for, increase in agricultural production presupposes fuller utilisation of the available manpower and release of surplus workers for other occupations. Village industries, therefore, call for programmes which will develop a great deal of local initiative and co-operation, and an

economic environment in which they have a reasonable chance of succeeding. If the measures to be undertaken are to be effective in dealing with so difficult a problem, it is essential that they should be commensurate with its size and importance." While framing a comprehensive programme for village industries, the Planning Commission does not hesitate to suggest†, "In addition to the emphasis on technical improvements, research and other measures for improving efficiency, the primary objective of policy should be to provide a field within which each cottage industry may be able to organise itself. Wherever a large-scale industry competes with a cottage industry, the appropriate course to adopt would be to try and formulate a common production programme."

It is now recognised that while it is essential that village industries should receive the maximum support in terms of State policy and specific assistance from Government, these measures cannot have more than short-term value, unless the techniques of cottage industries improve rapidly. The Planning Commission, therefore, rightly attaches the utmost importance to arrangements for research and training in village industries. With the prospects of rural electrification, the present rudimentary character of our village industries is likely to be transformed. The elimination of middleman and the substitution of a system of co-operative finance for it will also go a long way in re-establishing many of the languishing cottage industries.

### 363. Need for establishing basic industries in Assam :

Our State has bitter experience of almost complete dependence on other States of India as well as foreign countries for the satisfaction of its basic needs, e.g. cloth, iron and steel materials, paper, glass, both during the second world war and thereafter. The economic vulnerability of Assam which was so pointedly realised during the second world war has become even greater with the partition of the country. The geographical and commercial links of Assam as well as its sister States of Manipur and Tripura with the rest of India are so slight and tenuous that in case of any emergency arising with its neighbouring State of

\* First Five-Year Plan—Planning Commission—p. 315.

† Ibid, p.317.

East Bengal, which now constitutes a part of the independent dominion of Pakistan, its people are likely to be easily cut off from the main suppliers of its basic needs. This should bring home to its Government the imperative need for industrialising the State as rapidly as possible and to allow the growth of a more and more diversified economy which can readily absorb the shocks as a result of the partition of the country. For this purpose, a thorough examination of the present resources of Assam, both economic and social, and their exploitation in the interest of maximum employment and stabilization of its economy are a prime necessity. If the State cannot itself undertake the establishment of new industries, maximum possible support and encouragement should be given to private industrialists to come and settle in Assam for the establishment of industries which may cater to its basic everyday needs. Assam's mineral, hydro-electric and agricultural resources are great; what is required is comprehensive planning and adequate inducement to willing parties. From this point of view, it will be necessary to fully explore the immediate possibilities for establishing certain industries like cotton textiles, sugar, paper, jute, cement, plywood, etc., for which economic and geographical factors are favourable.

364. **'Plan or perish', a motto for our Government, our people and our industries :**

All this presupposes a thorough and comprehensive economic planning for the State in order to initiate a process of development which will raise living standards and open out to the people new opportunities for a richer and more varied life. "The problem of development of an under-developed economy is one of utilising more effectively the potential resources available to the community, and this involves economic planning. But the economic condition of a country at any given time is a product of the broader social environment, and economic planning has to be viewed as an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow technical sense, but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people".\* For the economic development of Assam 'Plan or perish' may well be our motto for the next decade befitting our present enhanced status as an autonomous State in the democratic Republic of India, in the same manner as Laski posed the alternatives of "We must plan our civilisation or we must perish" in the larger fields of international affairs and the survival of modern civilisation.

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\* First Five-Year Plan, p. 1.



## CHAPTER VI

# FAMILIES, SEXES AND PRINCIPAL AGE GROUPS

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 365. Reference to Statistics :

In this Chapter we shall review the statistics collected about houses and households, age, sex and civil condition of the population. The main tables prepared during the 1951 Census will be found in Part II-B of the Census Report. Subsidiary Tables of the 6th series given in Part I-B of the Census Report form the basis of the review contained in this Chapter. Subsidiary Table 6.1 gives the number of persons per 1,000 houses and households per 100 square miles in the state, and the different districts. Subsidiary Table 6.2 gives the number of households per 1,000 houses and distribution by size of 1,000 sample households of rural and urban population. The method of selecting the sample households is explained in the flyleaf to main table C-I—Household (size and composition), given in Part II-B of the Census Report. Subsidiary Table 6.3 gives the family composition of 1,000 households of the general population, while Subsidiary Tables 6.4 to 6.6 give the statistics of sex ratio of the general, rural and urban population as well as in the agricultural and non-agricultural classes and sub-classes. Subsidiary Tables 6.7 and 6.8 contain the figures of marital status and age distribution of married persons. Subsidiary Tables 6.9 to 6.14 deal with the proportion of infants (aged below one year), young children

(aged 1-4 years) boys and girls (aged 5-14 years), young men and women (aged 15-34 years), middle aged persons (aged 35-54 years) and elderly persons (aged 55 and over) in the general population.

A Census abstract of sample households for each village containing the household population, family structure, infants and adults in households and married and unmarried persons in the households has also been compiled and preserved in the bound manuscript volumes for each Census tract for such detailed study as might be necessary in future. This is a distinct advance on past practice.

#### 366. Comparability of the Statistics with those of the previous Censuses :

Wherever possible comparative figures of the previous Censuses have been given in the Subsidiary Tables. It is to be noted that there have been changes in the territories of the State from time to time, details of which are given in the flyleaf to main table A-II—Variation in population during 50 years, contained in Part II-A of the Census Report. No adjustments could, however, be made in some Subsidiary Tables of the 6th series.

At the present Census certain characteristics of the household have been compiled for the first time. These are given in main Table C-I—Household (size and composition), given in Part II-B of the Census Report and in Subsidiary Tables 6.2 and 6.3 in Part I-B.

The sex ratio statistics furnished in Subsidiary Table 6.4 are based on the duly adjusted population figures and the figures for 1951 are fully comparable with those for 1921, 1931 and 1941 given in the Table. The sex ratios given in Subsidiary Tables 6.5 and 6.6 are based on the occupational statistics collected at the 1951 Census. Comparative figures for the earlier censuses could not be worked out because of the extensive changes that were made in the economic classification of the people adopted at the 1951 Census. While considering the age structure and distribution of married people in the different age-groups, it should be remembered that the Census Statistics of 1931 were based on a total count and were smoothed by the use of a suitable formula before being tabulated, as explained in the Report of the 1931 Census. The figures of the 1941 Census are based on a 2 per cent sample and are adopted from the 1941 Y—Sample Age Tables for Assam. The manner in which the distribution of total population was estimated from the information provided by the Y—Sample has been described as follows:—

“Owing largely to conditions created by the war, the 2 per cent slips were not always properly extracted, and sometimes, not properly stored after extraction. In consequence, available district samples were defective. Adjustment had therefore to be made to eliminate, as far as possible, the effect of such defects. To make such adjustments use was made of the information relating to the distribution by communities of each sex as given in the Census tables. Fortunately the categories used in the present reconstruction namely ‘civil condition’ ‘literacy’ and ‘age distribution’ are all closely related to the two factors, sex and community.

“On the basis of the adjustments noted above, ‘weights or multipliers’ were determined to estimate from sample figures results for the whole population. The figures given in these tables are such estimates. This has led to certain numerical inconsistencies in the three sets of tables. In

each table, the estimation (by multiplication) was done at different points, and the results were rounded off and given in thousands nearest to one place of decimal. The cumulative effect of such rounding off was not uniform in these three sets of Table, which led to apparent (but entirely negligible) numerical inconsistencies.”

The 1951 Census tables dealing with civil condition and age groups are based on a 10 per cent sample extracted in the course of sorting the slips in accordance with the procedure explained in the flyleaf to main table C-II—Livelihood Classes by age groups, given in Part II-B of the Census Report.

### 367. The House and the Family :

Just as there is some ambiguity in the use of the terms “town” and “village” in the past Census records, in the same way obscurity surrounds the terms “house” and “family”. Describing the difficulty of defining a house, the All India Census Report of 1931 contains the following observation:—

“The term ‘house’ in India covers the greatest diversity of dwellings. The portable screens of bamboo matting carried on a gipsy’s ass, or the camel-borne tent of Bugti nomad are less primitive than the mere foliage wind screens of some of the Andamanese but still hardly conforming to the usual conception of the dwelling-house, though this term can fairly be applied to the conical grass huts of the Chenchu and the Bhil and still more to the thatched and mat-walled dwellings, often on piles or in trees, erected in the hills alike of Assam and Travancore”.

Dealing with the difficulty of defining a household, *i.e.*, a family, the above Report states: “If the house may vary from **chawl** dwelling of a large town to a sprawling **bari** in the country, so too the family is a difficult unit to define in correspondence to the house. Apart from collective houses of some of the hill tribes which accommodate all the bachelors or spinsters of the village, a Bengal **bari** may house a joint family of several married couples in contrast for instance to the Assam hill custom whereby the elder sons or in some tribes the elder daughters, set up new houses for themselves or, as in other cases, turn their parents out of the ancestral home to build a house for themselves elsewhere.”

## 368. Definitions :

The problem of finding a completely satisfactory definition of a census house is extremely difficult not only in India but all over the world. The census house had a tendency in the past to become a hybrid between the family and the building. For that reason the necessity of finding as satisfactory a definition as possible of a census house to be applied everywhere was obvious. In 1949 the Census Commissioner for India wrote to all State Governments stressing that house numbering (which is an essential preliminary to a population census under conditions where houses in villages are not laid out in regular streets) should now be done on a permanent and maintained basis, replacing the temporary *ad hoc* numbering of the past. **The basic definition of a house of all-India applicability was "a dwelling with a separate main entrance."** It was explained that in the case of such well-known phenomena as quarters opening on a courtyard, or flats opening on a common staircase, each of these dwellings would qualify for a separate house number. It did not matter whether there was more than one household in the dwelling, and the family composition of the inmates was likewise irrelevant. Each dwelling with a separate main entrance qualified for a separate number. The Government of Assam issued instructions on these lines to enumerators who were employed for preparing the house lists for election and census purposes. The principle was that each living group that had an independent access to the outer world was a house and was to be given a number. There were dwellings which harboured more than one family but unless the dwelling of a family had an independent access of its own to outside, it was not given a separate number. On the other hand, such well-known phenomena as quarters opening on to a courtyard, blocks of flats opening on to a common stair, doorways in the tea garden labour lines, wards in Police Lines, Jails, Hospitals, Lunatic and Leper Asylums and rooms in Hotels and Serais were all examples of a large number of independent dwellings each qualifying for a house number.

Ferry-ghats, temporary huts, tents erected by immigrants and refugees, serais, mosques, temples, etc., too were numbered.

It is obviously desirable that house numbering should be permanent and maintained. It has

been stressed by more than one committee set up by the Government of India that the household is the appropriate starting point for social and economic enquiries, particularly those based on sampling. A "household" implies a house, and therefore the first step was the separate numbering of individual dwelling houses. While a "house" for census purposes was defined as a dwelling with a separate main entrance, a **"household" meant all persons including dependants and servants who live together and have a common mess.** In some houses there might not be more than one group of persons with a common mess, each will constitute a separate household. A household may also consist of just one person only, e.g., each independent single person living in the boarding houses or with other households but taking food separately or an independent single person residing with two other households in the same house at the census, but taking his food separately. The enumerators were asked to distinguish these households by adding the letters A, B and C after the house number. The answers to the census questions recorded on the slips were subsequently transcribed by the enumerators by houses and households in serial order into a National Register of Citizens and these registers were used after the census to examine on a sampling basis the size and composition of family households. An enquiry of this nature would not have been possible on the basis of the census slips alone.

It is clear that the 1951 definition of the house is not comparable with definitions of the house adopted at previous censuses. The census house in 1951 meant:—

"a house consisting of the buildings one or many, inhabited by one family; that is by a number of persons living and eating together in one mess, with a common store of provisions, with their resident dependants, such as mother, widowed sisters, younger brothers, etc., and their servants who reside in the house. In other words, this unit is the commensal family known in some districts as the khana and not the homestead or enclosure; it means independent living."

In other words, the 1951 definition of a household roughly corresponds to the definition of a house at previous censuses, inasmuch as the previous definition of the house was based on the commensal family.

Apart from the tendency for the conclusions to flounder on the shifting ground of inadequate or changing definitions there were other difficulties. The question whether premises qualified for a separate house number has always tended to depend on the decision of the individual who did the housenumbering however lucid the definition might be. The same difficulty was also experienced at the 1951 census.

#### 368A. Civil Condition :

The following instructions were issued to enumerators regarding civil condition.

“Ask this question about everyone, including minor girls, boys or babies, without taking it for granted that such persons are unmarried because of their age.

Write : 1 for unmarried,  
2 for married,  
3 for widowed,  
4 if divorced.

Persons who have married again after being divorced or widowed should be treated as married, *i.e.*, 2.

“Divorced” means persons whose marriage ties have been severed by law, court, custom or mutual consent”.

On account of the prevalence of child marriages in some parts of India, the enumerators were particularly warned not to take it for granted that boys, minor girls or even infants are unmarried because of their seemingly tender age. Even in their cases also, they were to ascertain the fact courteously, without wounding any susceptibilities, and then only write down the answer.

#### 368B. Age :

The following instructions were issued regarding the age :—

“Write age last birth-day, *i.e.*, the actual number of completed years. For infants below one year, write O. This is an important question but many persons, specially in

the villages or those who are old or illiterate, are likely to find it difficult to state their age correctly or even approximately. You should assist them in recording their correct age. If you are not able to elicit the correct age directly, you should get at it by referring to some important events that are remembered by all, *e.g.*, Assam Earthquake of 1897, the Great War in 1914, August Movement of 1942, a heavy flood in the area in the past, the last Re-settlement etc.

First ask “What is your age?”. After any reply, say 27 years, always put a second question—“So you have completed 27 years and are you now in your 28th year?”. If the answer is “Yes”, then write 27 years, if the reply is “No” write 26 years.

This will avoid many wrong entries for ‘running’ age, *i.e.*, age next birth-day.”

Circle Supervisors were directed to prepare and give their enumerators after consulting their respective Charge Superintendents a calendar of outstanding local events with reference to which age could be estimated in rural areas, where the rural people do not bother very much about their exact age. As a result there is a marked tendency especially among the illiterate population to report age in round numbers, *i.e.*, in numbers ending in “0” or “5”; *e.g.*, 35, 50 and 55 when their actual age may be anything from 33-37, 48-52 and 53-57, respectively. In such cases, enumerators were to put additional questions to ascertain the correct age. Of course this phenomenon is not confined to India. To eliminate the bias in favour of this particular digit, the age figures were exhibited in the past in age groups of 5 or 10 years.

Before proceeding any further I should explain that the method of entering age differed from census to census. In 1921 and earlier censuses age was entered according to the number of completed years on the night of the census. Thus if a man was 37 years and 9 months old on the night of the 1921 census he was returned as 37 years of age. At the 1931 census, however, the age of an individual was entered in the census schedules as it was on the birth-day nearest to the census date: that is to say, if a person was 5 years and 5 months old on the 26 February 1931 his age was recorded as 5 but if he was

5 years and 7 months old, his age was recorded as 6 years. For infants under 6 months zero was recorded and 1 for infants over six months but under one year.

### 368C. Accuracy of age returns in Assam :

The age distribution at this Census is based on the 10 per cent sample taken from the entire population. For the 1941 census, we have the figures tabulated from the 2 per cent sample that was preserved after the preparation of the necessary tables. The age figures for the 1921 and 1931 Censuses are tabulated with reference to the entire population.

It is well-known that nothing connected with the census questionnaire is more difficult for illiterate persons than giving precise information relating to their age. In the case of such persons the enumerator had to do his best by questioning the more intelligent and elderly persons in the same household or neighbouring households and arrive at as good an approximation to the actual ages as was possible.

At the 1921 census the age ascertained was that attained at the last birthday. At the 1931 Census, what was ascertained was the age attained at the nearest birthday, which might be either prior to the Census date or subsequent to the Census date. At the 1941 Census, the more ambitious proposal to record not only the completed years but also the number of months which had elapsed since the last birthday and up to the Census date was tried. At the 1951 Census, we realised that this was too ambitious to attempt and we contented ourselves with ascertaining the number of completed years of age, that is, the age completed at the last birthday. People in this State usually give their running age, *i.e.*, the age that they would be completing at their next birthday. As at the last Census, the 1951 Census also showed the tendency of the people to give their age in multiples of 5, but the figures ascertained by the enumerators have been adopted without applying any smoothing formula. These differences in the ascertained ages are not, however, of an order which is likely to affect the validity of comparisons based on the figures recorded at the various censuses.

### 368D. Preference for certain digits, e.g., '0' or '5' :

Regarding the preference for certain digits (0 or 5). Mr. H. G. W. Meikle, Actuary to the Government of India in his "Report on the Age Distribution and Rates of Mortality deduced from the Indian Census Returns of 1921 and previous enumerations" writes :

"If an enumerator had to guess the ages of a lot of old men about age 80 he would enter most as aged 60, 70, 75, 85, 90, 100 or possibly even 120. It would be absurd if we were to guess many as aged 77, 79, 81, 83, etc. At the youngest ages say under 8, there is little preference shown for any particular age other than 5. At ages between 8 and 24 the preference is for even numbers and for age 15. Any one guessing the age of children aged about 10 would unconsciously enter more at 8, 10, 12, etc., than at 7, 9, 11, 13, etc. At ages 20 and over the largest numbers are found at each of the decennial ages. In this way 0 is much the most popular digit. The next most popular digit is 5."

I am afraid what Meikle wrote over 25 years ago is true even today. This preference for round numbers is due principally to the very hazy idea which most people in India have as regards their ages. But in addition we get errors as a result of deliberate overstatement or understatement. For example, the father of an unmarried Hindu girl of 15 would generally return her age as 12 as he would see no reason to advertise a matter which was probably causing him a certain amount of concern. And old people often like to exaggerate their age. A man of 70 is regarded as a very old man in Assam and it impresses the village if he claims to be a hundred. The number of Westernized and/or sophisticated women is so small that their well known tendency to understate their age makes no difference to our statistics. I mention the fact merely to show that in all countries social considerations tend to produce errors in the returns of age. The main inaccuracies in the age statistics are, however, principally due to the fact that most people in Assam simply do not know what their real age is. The ordinary illiterate cultivator who forms the vast majority of the population has only the foggiest notion about his age and his estimates may easily be 10 years out on either side. As stated above, certain striking events in the history of the state were used

sometimes to fix a man's age approximately. One of these is the great earthquake of 1897 which is still clearly remembered by the older generation and is used most often to ascertain the approximate age of an individual or his children by asking him how big he or his children were at the time of the great earthquake. The number of enumerators, however, who took the trouble of trying to fix the ages of persons they enumerated by reminding them of such events must be small compared to their total number. The crude returns of age must be candidly regarded as based almost entirely on guess work, and not a very intelligent guess work at that. This is inevitable under the present conditions in Assam with its backwardness, lack of modern sophistication and medical or educational facilities. The greater accuracy of single year age returns in the urban areas with their greater literacy confirms this.

#### 368E. Single year age returns :

Single year age returns were compiled and regularly exhibited only for those returned as less than 5 years old at past censuses, and no way was left open to the statistical analyst to get back to the original age returns of other ages until 1941 when single year age returns for several provinces, including Assam, prepared by the Statistical Institute, Calcutta, on the basis of a 2 per cent sample, long after the census tables were published. The predictive qualities of a sample will vary according to the aspect under examination and will in general be best when the aspect is universally present in the population. Age is a universal. Everybody whatever his vocation or location, must have an age. The age sample in 1941 was a very small one, but the extraction of data in regard to single year age returns marked a definite advance over the previous practice of publishing only age groups, a procedure which has been likened to putting the figures in a straight jacket. In 1951 extraction of age data was done on a sample basis by taking out every tenth slip. The greater size of the sample would tend to decrease the sampling error. The single year age returns in

both 1941 and 1951 reveal the great extent to which age was returned at the census in terms of the nearest five years, particularly after the age of twenty. It is for this reason that examination of the age data is done in relation to age groups, but since these age groups are merely summations of the single year age returns the quality of the single year age returns at any particular census is a matter of considerable importance.

The tendency to round off ages after 20 is very marked. This is understandable because recollection tends to fade with increasing years and birthdays have no special significance for most people. It does not matter what a man's exact age is "so long as he can be assigned to one or other of life's chief period—childhood or adolescence, the adult middle period or old age to each of which Hindu social custom assigns specific duties".\* Though the preference for round numbers is still very marked in 1951 the quality of the single year age returns is better than in 1941.

There is another aspect of bias in age reporting which deserves notice. In most districts the single year age returns of urban areas appear more accurate than those of the rural areas, a result which could be attributed to the greater literacy of the urban areas. For instance, in urban areas the bulges at the favourite round numbers were somewhat less pronounced than in the rest of the State, though they were in all conscience bad enough.

#### 368F. 1951 Age Group :

For considering the age structure of the population, statistics have been compiled under six broad categories, viz., infants, that is children below one year of age, young children, between the ages 1 to 4, boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 14, young men and women in the age group 15 to 34, middle aged persons in the age group 35 to 54, and elderly persons of the age 55 and over.

\* S. V. Mukherjee, "1941 Baroda Report", p.130.

## SECTION II

## TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSES AND HOUSEHOLDS

## 369. Increasing congestion in the State and Natural Divisions :

The territorial distribution of houses as given in Subsidiary Table 6.1 in Part I-B of the Report shows that during the last 30 years congestion in the housing accommodation in Assam is increasing apace, for example, only 4,634 persons lived in 1,000 houses in 1921. Their number rose to 4,830 in 1931 and 5,021 in 1941. At the present Census their number has shot up to 5,649. The figures for the Natural Divisions show the same trend. In the Assam Plains Division, 4,656 persons lived in 1,000 houses in 1921, whereas their number in 1951 is 5,692. The increase in Assam Hills Division is more gradual, from 4,907 persons per thousand houses in 1921 to only 4,916 in 1931 and 5,388 in 1951; in fact in 1941 the number of persons per thousand houses in this division had actually declined to 4,840. Table 6.1 given below shows the number of persons per house as ascertained at each census from 1921 to 1951 in each Division and State :—

TABLE 6.1

*Persons per house for general population  
(1921-51)*

State and Natural Division	Persons per house— General population			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
Assam	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.6
Assam Plains	4.7	4.9	5.0	5.7
Assam Hills	4.9	4.9	4.8	5.4
Manipur	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.1
Tripura	5.3	5.3	5.7	6.0

Table 6.1 clearly shows that in Assam and its Natural Divisions the trend has been roughly the same with a sharp increase between 1941-51. The provision of housing accommodation has clearly not kept pace with the growth in population. Contrast this with the situation in Madhya Pradesh where an actual reduction of congestion in the accommodation in the State has occurred, as shown by the fact that the number of persons per house in that State declined from 5.0 in 1921 to 4.9 in 1941 and 4.8 in 1951.

## 370. Houses in Rural Areas :

Table 6.2 gives for the rural areas figures corresponding to those in Table 6.1 for the general population :—

TABLE 6.2

*Persons per house for rural areas  
(1921-51)*

State and Natural Division	Persons per house— Rural population			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
Assam	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.6
Assam Plains	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.7
Assam Hills	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.3
Manipur	5.0	5.0	5.2	5.1
Tripura	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.6

The trends revealed by Table 6.2 for rural population are almost identical with those of the general population. So little a fraction of the general population lives in towns that even if urban areas were to reveal a widely different tendency, they would not have any appreciable effect on the percentage for rural population. Garo Hills is the only district which shows a decline in the number of persons per house. The whole of Garo Hills is rural, and there is no urban area in it. The average house in the Garo Hills being a ramshackle affair, one need not bother much about this solitary exception in the general trends.

## 371. Houses in Urban Areas :

The corresponding figures for urban areas are given in Table 6.3 below :—

TABLE 6.3

*Persons per house for urban areas  
(1921-51)*

State and Natural Division	Persons per house— Urban population			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
Assam	4.6	4.8	4.6	6.7
Assam Plains	4.6	4.8	4.6	6.3
Assam Hills	4.7	4.8	4.6	8.8
Tripura	5.2	5.9	6.6	10.0

There is an unmistakable and sharp increase in the number of persons per house in the urban



areas between 1941-51, a well-known phenomenon. This increase is of course, partly due to some migration from the rural areas but is mainly due to refugees who have congregated more into the towns. The increase in the number of persons per house during the past decade is much greater in the urban areas (2.1 persons per house) than in the rural areas (0.6 persons per house), or in the State as a whole. The same is true in the case of the Natural Divisions. Up to 1941 at least there was no greater congestion in the urban areas of Assam than in the rural. The figures for the State for the years 1921, 1931 and 1941 for rural and urban population are practically identical. Actually in 1941, number of persons per house in urban areas was considerably less than that in rural areas. Before the Second World War the urban areas of Assam were not congested as they had plenty of space to expand. Moreover, there was no shortage of housing materials which developed during the Second World War and became aggravated thereafter. In 1951 however, there were relatively far fewer houses in urban areas, and their number was not commensurate with the greatly increased population. The increase in urban areas of Assam Hills Division is, if anything, even greater than in Assam Plains from 4.6 persons per house in 1941 to 8.8 in 1951. It is largely due to the tremendous congestion in urban areas of United K. & J. Hills District: Shillong and its Cantonment taken together have shown the largest total and percentage increase of population of all towns in Assam. Three factors are mainly responsible for this abnormal increase in population: (i) influx of the refugees, (ii) the great expansion in the activities and departments of the State Government and (iii) much larger number of the Central Government Offices in the State capital than ever before in Shillong's history. The last two factors have resulted in the occupation of many residential houses for office purposes as well as for the residence of officials from outside, thus leaving much less housing accommodation for the resident population who had no alternative but to crowd themselves into the remaining available accommodation, made scarcer by the lack of building materials. These factors are responsible for the number of persons per house in Shillong shooting up from 4.2 in 1941 to 10.8 in 1951.

This is not merely a jugglery of figures but a plain fact that is evident to all residents of Shillong as well as to its visitors. Another district to show such a large lag between the growth of population and that of houses is Nowgong where the number of persons per house has increased from 2.8 in 1941 to 7.2 in 1951. The towns of Kamrup show this to a lesser extent from an increase of 5.1 persons per house in 1941 to 7.3 persons per house in 1951. A full idea about the housing congestion in each ward of each town can be obtained from a study of the Primary Census Abstracts in the District Census Handbooks of the districts concerned.

We must bear here one circumstance in mind. The nature of houses in the rural areas has been briefly described in Section I above. At many places these are huts or mere sheds and, therefore, the statistics of rural housing possess no great significance. As regards the urban areas, the housing statistics are of greater value as they show the rate at which congestion is increasing in the urban areas, undermining the health of the future generations of Assam.

### 372. Density of Houses :

Columns 14 to 17 of Subsidiary Table 6.1 give the number of houses per hundred square miles as ascertained at various censuses from 1921 onwards. The figure for each district depends of course on its area and the number of houses. We immediately discover a vast difference in the figures for Natural Divisions. Assam Hills has only 810 houses per hundred square miles, *i.e.*, only 8.1 houses per square mile whereas Assam Plains has as many as 5,953 houses per 100 square miles, *i.e.*, 59.5 houses per square mile; more than 7 times the average of the Assam Hills Division. It is this extraordinarily low density of housing in Assam Hills which is responsible for bringing down the State average to 31.1 houses per square mile. The density of houses has been the greatest in Cachar among the Plains districts of Assam in all the three decades while it has been the lowest in Goalpara. Kamrup is exceptional in the decline in the housing density during the last decade, from 5.9 houses per square mile in 1941 to 5.5 in 1951. Goalpara is another district in which the housing density has failed to register any perceptible increase whatsoever. Among the districts of Assam Hills Division, the density of houses is

the lowest in the Lushai Hills Division, only 4 houses per square mile against 16.4 in Garo Hills and 10.0 in the United K. & J. Hills. The lowest housing density of Lushai Hills is in line with the lowest density of population as well in this district. United Mikir and North Cachar Hills is another district showing an extremely small housing density of 4.7 houses per square mile.

The general picture presented by the figures for the State and its Natural Divisions is a steady increase from 1921 to 1951 in the density of houses. The density of houses has increased by about 9 per cent during the last 30 years. The increase in Assam Plains Division is nearly double, 17 per cent against a bare 2.2 in the Assam Hills Division. Table 6.4 given below compares the increase in the number of houses per hundred square miles with the increase in population.

TABLE 6.4

*Percentage increase in population and houses per 100 sq. miles (1921-1950)*

State & Natural Division	1921-30		1931-40		1941-50	
	(a)*	(b)†	(a)*	(b)†	(a)*	(b)†
Assam	19.3	14.5	19.7	15.1	19.1	5.9
Assam Plains	19.8	14.7	18.8	14.3	20.2	6.7
Assam Hills	16.2	13.2	25.3	19.9	12.4	1.0
Manipur	16.0	15.9	14.9	11.0	12.8	14.7
Tripura	25.6	26.7	34.1	23.6	24.6	24.3

The figures bring out forcefully how house building has lagged far behind the growth of population during 1941-50. This position is due to the suspension of building activities for civilian use during World War II, when the demands for the fighting forces and the war effort over-shadowed everything else. There was a tremendous shortage of building materials, especially iron and cement and the high cost of timber, bricks and labour during the war period was in itself a great deterrent to any building activity, except

\* (a) means percentage increase in population per 100 square miles.

† (b) means percentage increase in houses per 100 square miles.

what was essentially and compellingly necessary. The district of Goalpara appears to have suffered most from the shortage of building materials, as its housing density has failed to show any increase over the 1941 census figure.

### 373. Territorial Distribution of Households :

The territorial distribution of households per 1,000 houses is given in Subsidiary Table 6.2. A "household" means, as we have seen already, all persons who live together in the same house and have a common mess. More than one household may live in the same census house, or dwelling with a separate main entrance. Needless to say that the number of households generally exceeds the number of houses, though cases of a household spreading itself over more than one house were also encountered. The number of households per house in rural areas as compared with that in the urban areas is given in Table 6.5.

TABLE 6.5

*Number of Households per house in urban and rural areas*

State & Natural Division	Number of households per house in	
	Rural areas	Urban areas
Assam	1.1	1.2
Assam Plains	1.1	1.1
Assam Hills	1.0	1.6
Manipur	1.0	-
Tripura	1.1	1.8

The number of households per house is slightly larger in Assam Plains than in Assam Hills in the rural areas. In the urban areas, however, the number of households per house is decidedly larger (1.6) in Assam Hills than in Assam Plains (1.1).

Considering the urban areas of the State alone, we find that there are 1,205 households per 1,000 houses in the State as a whole, the Plains Division having a far smaller number 1,132 against 1,664 in Assam Hills. The urban areas of Assam Hills again show a greater relative congestion from the point of view of housing accommodation. The urban areas of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur which have not suffered from the influx of the refugees show practically one

household for every house, whereas in Cachar we have 1.2 households per house, against 1.9 households per house in Shillong. This is exactly in line with the phenomenon as observed by local officers and local inhabitants.

In the rural areas of Assam we find 1,075 households per 1,000 houses. The number in Assam Plains is 1,082 against 1,034 in Assam Hills. Kamrup is outstanding with 1,300 households per 1,000 houses, followed at a very great distance by Goalpara (1,100). These figures for the non-tea districts are in marked contrast with the districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar in which the number does not exceed 1,070 households per 1,000 houses.

#### 374. Sex Ratio in Rural Areas :

The number of persons, males and females, per household varies as shown below in the rural areas :—

TABLE 6.6

*Number of persons per household in rural areas*

State & Natural Division (1)	Persons per household		
	Total (2)	Males (3)	Females (4)
Assam	5.0	2.7	2.3
Assam Plains	5.1	2.7	2.4
Assam Hills	4.5	2.4	2.1
Manipur	4.7	2.3	2.4
Tripura	5.0	2.6	2.4

The figures in column 2 above show the average size of the family in the States and the Natural Divisions.

#### 375. Sex Ratio in Urban Areas :

The number of persons with their sex breakup per household in the urban areas is given in Table 6.7 below :—

TABLE 6.7

*Number of persons per household in urban areas*

State & Natural Division (1)	Persons per household		
	Total (2)	Males (3)	Females (4)
Assam	4.5	2.7	1.8
Assam Plains	4.3	2.7	1.6
Assam Hills	5.2	2.6	2.6
Tripura	4.3	2.3	2.0

#### 376. Reliability of the sex data given by this sample :

Columns 4 and 5 of the Subsidiary Table 6.2 are important as they give the sex ratio on the basis of the sample of 4 in 100 households. They provide an interesting study along with Subsidiary Table 6.4 where the sex ratio is given for the total population. Columns 4 and 5 of Table 6.2 show that there are 870 females per 1,000 males in rural Assam. According to the total count, however, the number of females per 1,000 males is 890 as given in Subsidiary Table 6.4. It means that our present sample underestimates the number of females per 1,000 males by 2 per cent. The percentage of error in the case of Assam Plains Division is practically negligible being of the extent of 0.6 per cent (872 females per 1,000 males according to the sample, against 878 according to the total count). In the case of Assam Hills, however, there is an underestimate of as large as 11 per cent as the sample gives out only 858 females per 1,000 males against 969 given by the total count. It is clear that the sample data is fairly accurate for Assam Plains Division while the accuracy suffers tremendously in the case of the sister Natural Division. It is mainly due to the fact that the sample itself was very small and when applied to the extremely small fraction of the total population contained in the Hills Division of Assam, the result is out by 11 per cent. Similarly when we consider urban Assam, we find therein only 658 females per 1,000 males according to the sample against 683 given by the total count in Subsidiary Table 6.4 which means an underestimate of 3.6 per cent only on the basis of the present sample. We are however, fortunate that though the accuracy of the sample in the case of one Natural Division suffers greatly on account of the small size of the population involved, the final result is in accordance with the general tendency of known facts and not directly contrary as we discover in Madhya Pradesh. According to the findings of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Madhya Pradesh; "In Madhya Pradesh the males outnumber the females in rural areas according to the 4 per cent sample. Actually, however, as is seen from col. 6 of Table 6.4, the females outnumber the males".

### 377. Territorial distribution of houses and households in Manipur :

According to Subsidiary Table 6.1, the number of persons per 1,000 houses in Manipur in 1921 was 4,992 from which it has risen to 5,087 in 1951, a very small increase indeed for a period of 30 years. Actually there is a decline in the number of persons per 1,000 houses in 1941 when it was 5,174. This shows that Manipur is in a much happier position than the sister State of Tripura where persons per 1,000 houses have increased from 5,332 in 1921 to 5,974 in 1951; *i.e.*, from 5.3 to 6 persons per house during the period of 30 years. Thus we see little evidence of increasing congestion in Manipur. (Refer to Table 6.1 above). As the whole of Manipur is practically rural there is no change whatsoever in the figures for Manipur in Tables 6.1 and 6.2, the latter dealing with rural areas. Separate figures for the small urban areas of Manipur are not available. Table 6.4 shows that the percentage increase in housing density has more or less kept pace with increase in density of population. During the past decade, the percentage increase in houses per 100 square miles was 14.7 against 12.8 in the case of population per 100 square miles. This is merely an indirect proof of the patent fact that most of the houses in Manipur are built of indigenous materials and are more in the nature of huts than anything else. There are 1,022 households per 1 000 houses in Manipur, and 1,076 in Tripura.

The total number of persons per household with their sex break-up is given in Table 6.6. Females (2.4) slightly exceed males (2.3) even according to the sample, a tendency completely in harmony with what is revealed by the total

count giving 1,036 females per 1,000 males in Manipur.

### 378. Territorial distribution of houses and households in Tripura :

Subsidiary Table 6.1 gives 5,974 persons per 1,000 houses in this State in 1951, against 5,332 in 1921. According to Table 6.1 given above, the number of persons per house in Tripura for general population has increased from 5.3 in 1921 to 6.0 in 1951, showing a steadily increasing congestion as regards housing accommodation. According to Table 6.2 above, the congestion in rural areas is increasing only gradually and actually there is a decrease in the past decade from 5.7 persons per house for rural population in 1941 to 5.6 in 1951. Urban Tripura, *i.e.*, Agartala, however, reveals an extraordinary state of affairs, where the number of persons per house has increased from 5.2 in 1921 to 10.0 in 1951; *i.e.*, every house in Agartala accommodates nearly double the number of persons it did 30 years ago. When we consider this mere overall average, the increase in congestion in certain areas, where refugees have taken shelter with their relatives and friends, is almost unimaginable. As in Manipur, we discover the percentage increase (24.3) in houses per 100 square miles has kept pace with the percentage increase (24.6) in population per 100 square miles in the past decade. This merely indicates the springing up of huts made of locally available materials to house refugees as well as the natural increase in population. Unlike Manipur, males (2.6) exceed females (2.4) in rural Tripura, as also in Agartala (2.3 males; 2.0 females). Table 6.4 reveals a similar characteristic.

## SECTION III

### SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

#### 379. Size of Households :

In Western Europe the normal family household would probably be considered to consist of a husband, his wife and their children, with such variations in the pattern as might be induced by the death of parents. Any additions to this pattern would be felt to be abnormal,

*e.g.*, orphaned children living with their relatives, or a widowed mother descending temporarily or permanently on her son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Due to the post-war housing shortage in Britain, a number of young married persons were compelled to live with their in-laws which was considered to be one such abnormal variation as referred to above

and was said to be responsible for much stress, strain and marital unhappiness. Such are attributes of a highly individualistic society and have probably been reinforced by the urban pattern of living, a decline in the death rate, and the growth of insurance. In a predominantly agricultural country like India, which has high birth and death rates, the joint family system is still the only form of insurance for the majority of the people, especially in the rural areas. The joint family pattern of living survives because it is customary, acceptable, convenient and cheap. That the pattern is breaking down under the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation is common knowledge. What is surprising is the evident strength of its survival as revealed by the family composition of the sample households.

The break-up of the joint family is being caused mainly by the growth of a more individualistic outlook on life in modern times with a narrower meaning of one's family and one's duty to it as well as economic circumstances. It has been occasioned largely by economic circumstances. Cousins no longer enjoy their old status in the family pattern. Pressure on the land has also probably accelerated the break-up of the large agricultural joint family. There is no shortage in most areas of agricultural labour, hence the tendency for those whose endeavours were surplus to the cultivation of joint family property to seek other avenues of employment. Again education of women and the decrease in child marriage means that women have become increasingly unable or unwilling to adopt themselves to a domestic situation in which they have to play a subordinate role to an elder matriarch. At the same time in the absence of much independent employment for women a dependent widow and her children would still become the responsibility of a male relative, hence the survival of the joint family household as a means of taking care of dependants, even in cases when the joint family as a legal entity has ceased to exist.

Households have been classified according to size as:—

- (a) Small *i.e.*, those with 3 members or less,  
 (b) Medium " " " 4 to 6 members,  
 (c) Large " " " 7 to 9 members,  
 and  
 (d) Very Large " " " over 9 members.

### 380. Size of households in rural areas :

The percentage of households under the above categories in respect of the rural areas is shown in Table 6.8 given below:—

TABLE 6.8

*Distribution of households by size in rural areas, 1951*

State and Natural Division	Average No. of persons per household	DISTRIBUTION OF 100 HOUSEHOLDS			
		Small	Medium	Large	Very large
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Assam ..	5.0	33	43	17	7
Assam Plains	5.1	32	42	18	8
Assam Hills	4.5	38	46	13	3
Manipur ..	4.7	35	47	15	3
Tripura ..	5.0	35	44	17	4

As usual there is little difference between the pattern of households classified by size in the State as a whole and in its Plains Division. Medium households form the largest group with 43 per cent in the State followed by small households (33), large households (17), and very large (7). Differences are, however, noticeable in every category of households in the two Natural Divisions. In Assam Hills the relative order of the four sizes of households remains the same, but large (13) and very large (3) households are relatively far fewer than in Assam Plains, wherein medium and small sized households form a smaller proportion of the total households. If small and medium size households are taken together and contrasted with large and very large households combined, we find 74 per cent under the former and 26 per cent under the latter in Assam Plains against 84 and 16 per cent, respectively, in Assam Hills. There can, therefore, be no doubt about the prevalence of smaller families in the Assam Hills. As the sample was small, I do not feel confident to embark on a districtwise analysis of these figures. Two facts, however, stand out and are so general that they may be specially noticed. Firstly, the tea districts have the smaller proportion of very large households—6 per cent each in Lakhimpur and Darrang and 8 per cent in Sib-sagar against 14 per cent in Nowgong and 9 per cent each in Goalpara and Kamrup. Secondly,

though the sample selected was very small, it does not fail to reflect the striking characteristics of hill tribes regarding their families, e.g., the Khasis and the Garo have no **Very Large** households at all. On the other hand we find in Lushai Hills 10.4 per cent of very large households, larger than any Plains or Autonomous district of Assam, except Nowgong. This is probably due to the custom of 'Chief's House', prevailing among the Lushais. The Khasis have the largest percentage of medium size households 57 per cent, but only 24 per cent of small households. Though tribes as a whole are more united socially and as a community than the men in the plains, they have as a rule, smaller families which the district figures do not fail to reflect.

### 381. Size of households in urban areas :

The percentage of households under the four categories described above in the urban areas is given in Table 6.9 below :—

TABLE 6.9

*Distribution of households by size in urban areas, 1951*

State and Natural Division	Average No. of persons per household	PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS			
		Small	Medium	Large	Very large
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Assam ..	4.5	46	34	10	10
Assam Plains	4.3	52	27	9	12
Assam Hills	5.2	22	56	17	5
Tripura ..	4.3	Nil.	100	Nil.	Nil.

In the State as a whole in the urban areas the small sized household constitutes the largest group with 46 per cent followed by the medium group (34), large (10) and very large (10). Thus medium and large groups in urban areas are much smaller, the difference being absorbed by 'small' group. It is natural to expect this in view of the diversified economy in the urban areas and the more individualistic outlook on life prevailing there. It is not possible to discuss the size of households by Natural Divisions because the figures for Assam Hills Division as a whole are not available. On account of the very small size of the sample only the United K. & J. Hills district could give some figures for the sample, all other hill districts showing blank. Hence, there are no genuine figures for Assam Hills Division, those for United K. & J. Hills being retained for the former. We cannot take the pattern of the Khasis as representative of the Hills Division as a whole, as the hill tribes of Assam differ in several important matters from one another, if not among themselves.

### 382. Composition of Households :

Subsidiary Table 6.3 based on sample data shows the composition of 1,000 households of the general population. It is derived from the main Table C-1 which is itself based on 1 in 1,000 sample households. The composition of an average household as seen from Subsidiary Table 6.3 is indicated in Table 6.10 given below :—

TABLE 6.10

*Composition of households in Assam, Manipur and Tripura*

State and Natural Division	Average No. of persons per household	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR WIVES		Sons	Daughters	OTHER RELATIONS	
		Males	Females			Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Assam	.. 4.9	0.90	0.78	1.14	0.87	0.49	0.62
Assam Plains	.. 5.1	0.90	0.79	1.16	0.88	0.49	0.64
Assam Hills	.. 4.6	0.87	0.79	1.02	0.83	0.49	0.50
Manipur	.. 4.7	0.81	0.93	1.25	0.89	0.20	0.52
Tripura	.. 5.0	1.00	0.84	1.04	0.94	0.52	0.64

In Table 6.10, the six degrees of relationship—Heads of households and their wives, sons, daughters, other male relatives and other female relatives—are shown, according to the proportion they form of the average family household. Sons are of course more numerous than daughters in every district, because the latter get married at an earlier age in their turn and leave their parents to live in the houses of their husbands or fathers-in-law. The heads of households and their wives in Assam constitute about 36 per cent of the household population. The sons and daughters of the heads of the household on the other hand constitute 40 per cent; other male relatives account for 10 per cent against other female relations who form about 12 per cent of the household population. This leaves a balance of about 2 per cent of the household population which consists of the unrelated members of the household and the resident servants. This analysis would show that the heads of the families, their wives and children together constitute about 76 per cent of the household population and out of the remaining 24 per cent, about 22 per cent are other relatives and 2 per cent unrelated persons and resident servants. The fact that nearly one-fourth of the family members in our Sample consists of male and female relatives, apart from the heads of the households, their wives, sons and daughters, shows the prevalence and continuance of the joint family system as against the husband-wife and children type of families in the West. It is also interesting to note that out of this one-fourth, females constitute two-thirds of the number. This is consistent with the Indian social life where a large number of widows reside with their relatives. Precise degrees of relationship are not established by the Tables. It may be asked for instance why, when there were 896 male heads of households in Assam, there were only 715 wives of heads of households. The explanation is that the sex ratio is unfavourable to women, particularly in the adult age groups, due in part at least to heavy maternal mortality. Again heavy immigration in Assam tends to react unfavourably on the sex ratio for women.

The percentage figures of the household composition is given below in Table 6.11. It is in-

teresting to observe that larger percentage of female relatives is found in Assam Plains than in Assam Hills. The percentage of unrelated persons and resident servants is naturally smaller in Assam Hills than in Assam Plains :—

TABLE 6.11

*Percentage figures of household composition*

State and Natural Division	Heads of households and their wives	Sons and daughters of heads of households	Male relatives	Female relatives	Unrelated persons and resident servants
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Assam ..	36	40	10	12	2
Assam Plains	33	41	10	13	3
Assam Hills	36	40	11	11	2
Manipur ..	37	45	4	11	3
Tripura ..	37	38	10	13	2

### 383. Size and Composition of Family Households of Manipur :

Here Medium group is even larger than either in Assam or its Natural Divisions or Tripura, constituting 47 per cent of all households, whereas the group Very Large households is as small as we find it in the case of Assam Hills. The excess of females over males is again brought out in Table 6.10, giving the composition of Manipur. Manipur is the only natural division where the wives (0.93) of the heads of households exceed the heads of the households themselves (0.81), out of an average of 4.7 persons per household. The figure for heads of households themselves (0.81) is lower than that for any other natural division dealt with in this Report.

### 384. Size and Composition of Family Households of Tripura :

The average number of persons per household and their distribution into the four-fold classes of small, medium, large and very large groups in Tripura, broadly resemble those in Assam, excepting the fact that Very Large households are 4 per cent in Tripura against 7 in Assam. In the urban households we find an extraordinary feature not seen anywhere else; cent per cent households are medium-sized, the proportion of small, large and very large being totally nil. This is a remarkable feature, the like of which we do not find in any other



natural division. Considering the composition of households of Tripura, we find that it has the largest proportion of heads of households, viz., 1.00 against 0.81 in Manipur and 0.9 in Assam. whereas its proportion of the wives of the heads

of households (0.84) is smaller than that of Manipur only. We find largest proportion of male relations in Tripura. 0.52 out of an average of 5 persons per household are male relations against 0.49 in Assam and 0.2 in Manipur.

## SECTION IV

### SEX

#### 385. Sex Ratio in General Population :

TABLE 6.12  
*Females per 1,000 males (1921-51)*

State and Natural Division	Females per 1,000 males			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
Assam	910	889	889	879
Assam Plains	898	875	874	868
Assam Hills	991	980	978	956
Manipur	1,041	1,065	1,055	1,036
Tripura	885	885	886	904

From a study of Table 6.12 above, two facts about Assam clearly emerge :—

- (i) There is a larger proportion of males in the population than of females, not merely at the present but at all previous censuses from 1921 onwards; and
- (ii) that the number of females per thousand males has steadily decreased from 910 in 1921 to 879 in 1951.

We find the preponderance of males in the Natural Divisions also, as well as in every single district of Assam except Lushai Hills. This is in line with the phenomenon generally observed in most States of India excepting Southern India, Manipur, Orissa and Kutch. Even in Madras also, however, the number of females per thousand males is steadily declining from 1,020 in 1921 to 1,006 in 1951. This predominance of males throughout India has been the subject of much discussion in previous Census reports. In Western Europe females are in excess and certain critics and even demographers have, at times, impugned the accuracy of the Indian statistics of sex and suggested that a serious omission of women takes place

in the Indian Census returns. These criticisms were refuted with great vigour by Sir Edward Gait in his Report of 1911; he pointed out that social conditions in India were entirely different from Europe, that in Europe boys and girls were equally cared for whereas in India sons were highly prized and daughters generally regarded as a burden. Furthermore, girls in India were usually given in marriage at a very early age and primitive midwifery added very largely to the normal dangers to which they were exposed at child-birth. The deficiency of females in the population of India is an undoubted fact. The deficiency is very marked in the north and north-west India, but tends to be counterbalanced by an excess of females in the South, as already stated above.

It is unnecessary for me to go over the old ground again. The subject has already been discussed in great detail and I have no further light to throw on it. Personally, I have no doubt that early marriages and the lack of proper parental attention and care are mainly responsible for the low proportion of females to males in the natural population of Assam. It is one of the commonest experience of any Indian child to hear from the mouth of his or her parents, even when they belong to very advanced and civilised castes or communities how the birth of a son is always more welcome than the birth of a daughter. The neglect of girls at childhood is even now prevalent.

In Assam the preponderance of males is much larger in Assam Plains than in the Hills. In Assam Hills Division, the proportion of the sexes is more nearly equal; was actually 991 females to 1,000 males in 1921. Thereafter the proportion of the sexes is becoming more and more

unequal in favour of the males by females per 1,000 males declining from 991 in 1921 to 980 in 1931, 978 in 1941 and 956 in 1951. At the 1951 Census, the Hills had as many as 956 males per thousand females against only 868 in Assam Plains. The proportion of females in the Hills Division would have been even larger, if the Plains population of N. E. F. A. with their much smaller number of females per thousand males had been removed from the Hills and included under the Plains where they rightly belong.

Among the districts of Assam Plains, Cachar shows the highest number of females, 897 against 839 in Lakhimpur and 859 in Darrang. In 1921, the female ratio in Cachar (918) was surpassed by that in Kamrup (920), but in 1931 Cachar again fully caught up with it (903). In 1941, with 897, it forged ahead of Kamrup (877) and surpassed Sibsagar (882) and Goalpara (880).

As mentioned above, Lushai Hills (1,041) is the only district in Assam today, (apart from the Naga Tribal Area which can be safely ignored in this connection) to show a larger proportion of females than males. The proportion of females was even higher in 1921 when it was as large as 1,109 declining to 1,102 in 1931 and 1,069 in 1941. In 1941 Census, Naga Hills (1,020) was the only other district to show an excess of females, there being none such in 1931, excepting the Lushai Hills. The curious reader who is interested in knowing more about the sex proportion of the Hills Tribes, can refer to a special Table for the Assam Tribals which gives the number of each tribe in Assam for every district with their sex break-up.

### 386. Gradually increasing inequality of sexes :

Not merely males preponderate over the females in Assam but the preponderance itself is gradually increasing. Females per thousand males declined by 21 between 1921-30. Apparently, there was no further decline during 1931-40. In the past decade, however, the old tendency has reasserted itself and there has been a fall of 10 females per thousand males over the 1941 figures. Even if we consider the 1941 figure, based as it is, on the 'Y' Sample not fully accurate, there is no doubt about a decline in the proportion of women since 1931. Every district of Assam shows a gradual increasing preponderance of males over females. In the Lushai Hills where the females predominate, P/42-40.

the predominance of females is steadily declining. Goalpara is the solitary exception which registers an increase, very small, over its 1931 figure. I do not know how far the non-return of some Muslim immigrants from this district is responsible for this curious phenomenon.

Accepting 1941 figures, however, as correct, we notice that in every district of Assam, except Cachar and Goalpara, the number of females per thousand males, is less in 1951 than in 1941. In Cachar it remains the same as in 1941 whereas it is greater by just 1 in Goalpara. Over a 30 years period, i.e., 1921-51, Goalpara is the only district in Assam to register a small rise in the proportion of females per thousand males. Naga Hills repeats the performance among the Autonomous Districts. I attach no weight to the figures shown against United Mikir and North Cachar Hills because for 1921 and 1931 they refer only to the North Cachar Hills Sub-division whereas for 1941 and 1951 they refer to the whole district.

### 387. Sex Ratio of Assam compared with that of other Part 'A' States of India :

Table 6.13 given below gives females per thousand males in Assam and other Part 'A' States of India :—

TABLE 6.13

*Females per thousand males in 1951 in India and Part 'A' States*

1. India	947
2. Assam	897
3. Uttar Pradesh	910
4. Bihar	989
5. Orissa	1,022
6. West Bengal	859
7. Madras	1,006
8. Bombay	932
9. Madhya Pradesh	993
10. Punjab	921

Obviously, Assam has the lowest proportion of females per thousand males among Part 'A' States in India, excepting West Bengal (859). Orissa has the largest proportion of females per thousand males, 1,022 against 1,006 in Madras

and 993 in Madhya Pradesh. The tremendous disparity of the sexes in West Bengal is due to the overshadowing influence of the city of Calcutta where there are only 570 females per 1,000 males, and partly to the immigrants including the Hindu refugees. The main cause of this maldistribution of sexes in Assam appears to be the great regular migration which pours into Assam, particularly the Brahmaputra Valley. In the 1931 Census Report of Assam, Mullan writes :

"The proportion of females to 1,000 males in the actual population of Assam was 926 in 1921 and is now only 909. If, however, we take the natural population of the province, *i.e.*, the actual population *minus* immigrants *plus* emigrants the proportion becomes much higher and stands at 945 females for every thousand males. In 1921 the proportion of females calculated on the natural population was 951 so that there has been only a slight fall in the female proportion of the natural population. It is obvious from these figures that immigration into Assam largely accounts for the small proportion of females in the actual population of the province."

Explaining the phenomenon, he gives the following table, giving the number of females per thousand males of actual population in Assam and its Natural Divisions, **as then constituted**, which may be of some interest even today.

TABLE 6.14

*Females per 1,000 males (1901-31) in pre-partitioned Assam*

State and Division	Number of females per thousand males			
	1931	1921	1911	1901
Assam	909	926	940	949
Brahmaputra Valley	869	892	913	924
Surma Valley	928	937	943	947
Hills	1,017	1,023	1,026	1,037

"It is clear from this table that in the Hills and the Surma Valley, the rate of decrease in the proportion of women has been very slow, compared with the rate of the decrease in the Brahmaputra Valley. We have already seen in Chapter III, Migration, that the Brahmaputra Valley is the Natural Division which has at-

tracted most of the immigrants to the province and hence the large decrease in the proportionate figures of that valley does not come as a surprise.\*"

### 388. Sex Ratio of general population minus displaced persons :

The explanation of immigrants being responsible for a decrease in the proportion of females to males in Assam is borne out by the following Table 6.15, which gives the number of females per thousand males for general population from which displaced persons with their sex break-up have been taken out :—

TABLE 6.15

*Females per 1,000 males in General Population minus Displaced Persons*

State Natural Division and District	Females per thousand males
Assam	881
Assam Plains Division	869
Cachar	901
Goalpara	884
Kamrup	867
Darrang	860
Nowgong	862
Sibsagar	872
Lakhimpur	839
Assam Hills Division	957
United K. and J. Hills	950
Naga Hills	998
Lushai Hills	1,042
Garo Hills	952
United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	914

\* Note. The number of females per thousand males for the Hills Division for 1921 and 1931 given in the above table differs from the figures given in the earlier Table 6.12 because of the fact that the Hills Division in 1931 included Manipur, which combined with Lushai Hills was enough to return a predominance of females over males in spite of the general tendency of all other Hill Districts to have a slight preponderance of males over females. This is clear from the following quotation, from page 78 of the 1931 Census Report for Assam.

"The Lushai Hills and Manipur State are the only two areas where females are actually in excess but that in all other hill districts—the Garo Hills, the Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills and the Naga Hills—females, though in a minority, are nearly equal to the number of males."

In every single case, in Assam, its Divisions and districts, wherever displaced persons have gone, they have helped in reducing the proportion of females. The reduction is, however, not substantial because due to the danger that was involved in leaving the other family members behind the displaced persons generally came in whole families, and not singly like the other immigrants.

### 389. Sex Ratio of the rural population.

Table 6.16 given below gives the number of females per thousand males, as ascertained at the last 4 censuses for the Rural population :—

TABLE 6.16

#### *Females per 1,000 males in Rural population*

State and Natural Division	Females per 1,000 males			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
Assam	920	900	900	890
Assam Plains	907	886	885	878
Assam Hills	999	994	994	969
Manipur	1,041	1,065	1,055	1,039
Tripura	888	889	891	909

In line with the tendency of general population, of which the rural population forms the overwhelming majority of 96.5 per cent, the females are out-numbered by males in the rural population also, though the disparity between males and females in the rural areas is slightly less than in the general population. In the rural areas also, there is a gradual fall in the number of women per thousand males in all Natural Divisions and most of the districts.

### 390. Sex Ratio in the Urban areas :

TABLE 6.17

#### *Females per 1,000 males in Urban population*

State and Natural Divisions	Females per thousand males			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
Assam	634	591	617	683
Assam Plains	614	573	605	664
Assam Hills	750	683	673	773
Tripura	787	579	754	836

Table 6.17 shows that females per thousand males in urban population are 683 only against 890 in the rural areas. Thus the disparity between males and females is far greater in the

urban areas than in the rural. This is a phenomenon observed everywhere and it is so in every single district of Assam so far as its urban and rural population is concerned. What is more surprising to find is however that the number of females per 1,000 males in the urban population which was only 634 in 1921 has now increased to 683 in 1951, an increase of nearly 8 per cent in 30 years period. The female population in the urban areas in 1931 showed a considerable decline and went down to 591 females per thousand males but it rose to 617 in 1941 and continued to rise during the past decade. In Assam Plains, females per thousand males show a rise of 50 over 614 in 1921; in Assam Hills Division also, there is a rise, but it is of a smaller extent, only 23 in 30 years. This rise in the female population in the urban areas, which is consistent over the past two decades, clearly reflects the increasing tendency towards permanent migration from villages to towns. In the past most people who came to towns for earning their livelihood left their families in villages. This tendency is gradually diminishing with the improvement in the means of communications, development in the urban areas and the spread of modern ideas about the urban life in general. The increasing female ratio in the urban areas is a healthy sign, showing as it does, a more stable population.

### 391. Sex Ratio for agricultural and non-agricultural population :

TABLE 6.18

#### *Sex Ratio for agricultural and non-agricultural population*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER THOUSAND MALES		
	General Population	Agricultural Population	Non-Agricultural Population
Assam	879	910	799
Assam Plains	868	895	803
Assam Hills	956	997	752
Manipur	1,036	1,007	1,200
Tripura	904	931	827

Table 6.18 which shows sex ratios separately for the agricultural as well as the non-agricultural classes, gives a far higher sex ratio for the former (910) in Assam than for the latter (799).

The figures for the Natural Divisions show a similar pattern, 895 among the agricultural population of Assam Plains against 803 among the non-agricultural population. In Assam Hills the sex ratio for agricultural population is 997 against only 752 for the non-agricultural. This is because economic pressure of the immigrants affects the agricultural classes much more than it does the non-agricultural classes and that a larger number of immigrants are males.

### 392. Sex Ratios in Agricultural Class I to IV :

The sex ratios in the different agricultural classes, viz., Livelihood Classes I to IV are compared in the Table 6.19 given below :—

TABLE 6.19

#### *Sex Ratios in Agricultural Classes I to IV*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER THOUSAND MALES IN				
	All Classes	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Assam	910	919	883	746	1,127
Assam Plains	895	902	880	681	1,121
Assam Hills	997	997	962	1,031	1,204
Manipur	1,007	993	1,068	970	1,233
Tripura	931	944	881	806	1,133

The highest sex ratio under Class I reflects the fact that the economic condition of the owner cultivators who form the bulk of the agricultural classes is slightly better than that of the average cultivator. Because of better conditions of living, females of this class survive more than do those of other Classes or total Agricultural Classes combined. Class II comprises persons who are tenant cultivators; generally speaking their economic condition is poorer than that of the bulk of the persons in Class I. It is not, therefore, surprising to find a lower sex ratio for the State as a whole (883), as well as its Natural Divisions in Class II than in Class I. Class III (746) comprises cultivating labourers, whose economic condition is the worst of all Agricultural Classes, and this is reflected in their sex ratio, which is the lowest of all Agricultural Classes, individually as well as collectively. Class IV (1,127) comprises non-cultivating landlords and agricultural rent receivers who are economically the best off

among the agricultural classes. We should, therefore, expect to find a lower death rate for their women. The position should be roughly the same for the men in this class also; but in many cases the men in the same family may have other means of livelihood and may have been returned accordingly and their figures will not, therefore, come in here. It is noteworthy that among the self-supporting persons of Class IV there are as few as 692 females per 1,000 males.

Among all Agricultural Classes the highest sex ratio is returned by Cachar (918) among the districts of the Assam Plains Division. In the districts of Assam Hills the palm goes to Lushai Hills (1,058) here as well as in Class I (1,057) and Class III (3,000). As there are no cultivators of unowned land in Lushai Hills, the district is not a competitor for this honour for Class II, whereas for Class IV its sex ratio is surpassed considerably by that of Garo Hills (1181), not to talk of United K. and J. Hills (1529). Cachar continues to show the highest sex ratio in Class I and Class III. In Class IV its sex ratio (1,176) is slightly surpassed by that of Goalpara (1,188), whereas under Class II Cachar (879), is surpassed both by Goalpara (890), and Darrang (891). Among all agricultural classes in the Assam Hills Division apart from the Lushai Hills District, Naga Hills (1033) and United K. and J. Hills (1,017) show a slight excess of females over males. These districts reveal the same tendency for individual agricultural classes as well.

### 393. Sex Ratios for Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.20 given below compares the sex ratios for each of the Livelihood Classes V to VIII with those for all non-agricultural classes as a whole.

TABLE 6.20

#### *Sex Ratios for different Non-Agricultural Livelihood Classes*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES IN NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES				
	All Classes	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Assam ..	799	869	741	705	712
Assam Plains	803	872	726	705	714
Assam Hills	752	776	931	700	703
Manipur ..	1,200	1,689	1,137	817	813
Tripura ..	827	900	810	840	800

It will be seen that the deficiency of females is the largest in Class VII, *i.e.*, Transport, (705 only), and there is a marked deficiency in Class VIII, (712), as well which comes next in this respect. The figures of Class VII reflect a proportionately larger number of men living without their families in this Class, particularly drivers and conductors of buses and lorries and the railway staff. Class V (869) has the best sex ratio among the different non-agricultural Livelihood Classes, against Class VI (741) and Class VII (705). This clearly brings out that the tea garden labour migration is decreasing in importance in Assam as pointed out at several places in this report and that the immigration that occurs is of a permanent nature, with hardly fewer numbers of women than men. Figures under Classes VII and VIII which show a larger female deficiency than even the agricultural class III undoubtedly reflect the backward condition of this Class and the hard conditions of living among them.

The low sex ratio in the non-agricultural classes is explained by the fact that the bulk of the non-agricultural occupations are carried on in the urban areas and men from the surrounding rural areas move into towns greatly attracted by them leaving their womenfolk behind and taking them there only later, after they had settled down. It is also well known that in non-agricultural classes marriage takes place generally later than among the agricultural classes.

Among non-agricultural classes as a whole the highest sex ratio is returned by Lushai Hills (839) in Assam Hills Division; this district continues to do the same for Livelihood Classes V and VIII. In the former it shows as many as 881 females per 1,000 males against 776 in the Assam Hills Division and in Class VIII it returns 819 against 703 for the Natural Division. Among the autonomous districts it is Naga Hills which returns the least favourable sex ratio (561) among not merely non-agricultural classes as a whole but individually in Class V (556), Class VI (616) and Class VIII (531). It is only in Class VII that the sex ratio (731) is much higher than that of Lushai Hills (574) and Garo Hills (605).

Among the districts of the Assam Plains Division Cachar (866) shows the highest sex ratio

among non-agricultural classes as a whole as well as individually, excepting Class V when it (898) is surpassed by Kamrup (905). For non-agricultural classes as a whole, Nowgong (744) has the lowest sex ratio; for Class V it is Goalpara (796), for Class VI it is Lakhimpur (591), for Class VII it is Darrang (497) and for Class VIII it is Lakhimpur (520).

#### 394. Sex Ratios among self-supporting persons of Agricultural Classes :

Sex ratios among self-supporting persons of agricultural classes are given below in Table 6.21 separately for each class and also for all Classes :—

TABLE 6.21

*Sex Ratios for self-supporting persons of Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	All Classes	FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES IN AGRICULTURAL CLASSES			
		Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Assam ..	211	223	120	283	692
Assam Plains	150	157	100	140	682
Assam Hills	517	500	500	879	855
Manipur ..	377	370	394	571	544
Tripura ..	370	342	331	601	709

(i) It is not surprising to find a very low sex ratio among self-supporting persons of all Agricultural Classes (211 females per 1000 males). In Madhya Pradesh we find an identical ratio for the self-supporting persons of all Agricultural Classes.)

(ii) The sex ratio is small in Class I. The self-supporting persons in this class are mostly males. The sex ratio in Class II (283) is definitely higher than in Class I and very much more so than in Class II (120 only). In Class III women work more than they do in the other two agricultural classes to supplement their family income; in fact the number of women who work would be even larger making the sex ratio still higher but for their having to attend to their domestic duties and to look after children. Hard conditions in the Assam Hills Division are reflected in the sex ratio figure under Class II which is five times that of Assam Plains and more than four times that of the State as a whole. Class IV generally speaking has the highest sex ratio, as much as 692 in the State, against 741 in Madhya Pradesh and 669 in Madras.

Table 6.21 shows that in all agricultural classes combined as well as in each considered separately far more women work and become self-supporting in Assam Hills than in Assam Plains. For example, for all agricultural classes Assam Hills returns 517 against 150 in Assam Plains. For Class I, the respective figures are 500 and 157, for Class II, 500 and 100, for class III, 879 and 140 and for Class IV, 855 and 682. Lakhimpur (237) shows the largest number of self-supporting females against 86 in Cachar among agricultural classes. Actually Cachar has the lowest number of females per 1,000 males not merely in all agricultural classes but also in Classes I, II and III. It is only in the case of Class IV that Cachar (698) is the third highest next only to Goalpara (894) and Darrang (747). Darrang (311) stands out pre-eminent in Class I by returning nearly double the number of females per 1000 males than the average for the Assam Plains Division (157) in this class.

### 395. Sex Ratios for Earning Dependants in Agricultural Classes :

The sex ratios among earning dependants in all agricultural classes, taken together and each separately, are given in Table 6.22 below :—

TABLE 6.22

*Females per 1,000 males amongst Earning Dependants of Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	All Classes	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Assam ..	1,416	1,444	1,364	860	1,736
Assam Plains	1,310	1,316	1,340	773	1,763
Assam Hills	2,179	2,207	2,027	1,582	1,493
Manipur ..	2,503	2,455	2,630	1,070	4,170
Tripura ..	1,335	1,444	873	1,008	923

A far larger figure (1,416) under this category as against 910 for all agricultural classes in Assam reflects the fact that far more women are part time workers owing to their pre-occupation with household work. In the small agricultural Class III, the sex ratio (860) is the lowest against 1,654 in Madras and 3,310 in Madhya Pradesh. In Class IV the presence of as many

as 1,736 females per 1,000 males among earning dependants shows that it is comparatively not so well off as we would have expected and a large percentage of its women have to work to supplement the family income. The Assam Hills Division shows a far larger number of women who are earning dependants not merely in all agricultural classes but also in Classes I, II and III; where it does not, as in the case of Class IV, the numbers in Assam Hills are practically negligible. Cachar (573) shows the smallest number of females among its earning dependants against the high watermark of 1,773 attained by Sibesar.

### 396 Sex Ratios for Non-Earning Dependants in Agricultural Classes :

The sex ratios among the non-earning dependants in Agricultural Classes, taken together and each separately, are given in Table 6.23 below :—

TABLE 6.23

*Sex Ratios for Non-Earning Dependants in Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES IN AGRICULTURAL CLASSES				
	All Classes	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Assam ..	1,332	1,315	1,406	1,402	1,299
Assam Plains	1,364	1,349	1,417	1,470	1,297
Assam Hills	1,151	1,149	1,170	1,137	1,318
Manipur ..	1,092	1,099	1,040	1,261	1,058
Tripura ..	1,383	1,384	1,539	1,065	1,438

The sex ratio is very high. For all Agricultural Classes in the State as a whole it is 1,332: it is slightly higher for Assam Plains, 1,364 than in Assam Hills 1,151. The same is the case with Classes I, II and III in which females per 1,000 males in Assam Plains and Hills respectively are 1,349 and 1,149, 1,417 and 1,170, 1,470 and 1,137. The Table simply confirms the well known fact that there is a much larger percentage of non-earning dependants among women than among men.



### 397. Sex Ratios for self-supporting persons in non-agricultural classes :

The sex ratios for self-supporting persons in non-agricultural classes are given in Table 6.24 below :—

TABLE 6.24

*Sex Ratios for self-supporting persons of Non-Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES IN NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES				
	All Classes	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Assam ..	376	590	92	18	157
Assam Plains	389	601	69	17	150
Assam Hills	235	313	399	23	189
Manipur ..	523	1,181	495	46	118
Tripura ..	182	343	132	29	129

As one would expect to find among the non-agricultural classes the sex ratio is very low (376) throughout the State. Generally speaking non-agricultural occupations require more training and sustained work than agricultural ones. Men are, therefore, preferred for these occupations, some of which are hardly suitable for women. We naturally find the small sex ratio in Class VII (18 for the State as a whole and 17 for Assam Plains). Transport services are manned mostly by men and the percentage of women employed is negligible. The comparatively much larger figure under Class V (590) in Assam and 601 in Assam Plains, against 149 in Madras and 144 in Madhya Pradesh reveals the large extent to which women have been absorbed in tea plantations. The number of self-supporting women per 1,000 self-supporting men in Commerce is only 92; their number in Assam Plains is only 69, but the State average is forced up by the far larger number of women who take to petty trades and commerce, particularly hawking and small shops in Assam Hills where they are as many as 399. Here the figure of self-supporting women under Commerce in the United K. & J. Hills district 613 against the Natural Division average of 399 is particularly striking, being over sex times the highest figure for any plains district in Assam. The next largest sex ratio is under Class VIII, namely, Other Services and Miscellaneous Sources. This is a miscellaneous category which accounts for more self-supporting women than under Commerce or Transport; but the proportion is small less than

one-sixth of the males in the Class. With the increasing employment of women in various professions and jobs, e.g., teachers, typists, clerks, nurses, midwives, doctors, etc., the proportion of females in this class is bound to increase in future, the increase depending on the course of the modernisation of our society. These developments which are inevitable should, on the whole, be welcomed; when they assume appreciable proportions, they are bound to have their repercussions in the future even on the growth of population, as witnessed in the case of all western countries.

### 398. Sex Ratios for Earning Dependants of Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.25 given below gives the sex ratios among the earning dependants of non-agricultural classes :—

TABLE 6.25

*Sex Ratios for Earning dependants of Non-Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES IN NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES				
	All Classes	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Assam ..	1,210	1,504	775	626	1,079
Assam Plains	1,199	1,495	753	615	1,052
Assam Hills	1,399	1,729	1,153	800	1,324
Manipur ..	4,300	4,986	4,320	1,869	3,338
Tripura ..	728	1,069	236	493	782

In the State as a whole the sex ratio for earning dependants in the non-agricultural classes is 1,210. Class VI, Commerce, has the smallest sex ratio (626) followed by Class VII Transport (775). Then comes Class VIII (1,079) and lastly Class V (1,504). These figures reflect the comparative economic condition of this class and the resulting attempts by the womenfolk to work and supplement the family income by engaging themselves in occupations which they may find suitable for them.

### 399. Sex Ratios for non-earning dependants of Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.26 gives the sex ratios among the non-earning dependants in non-agricultural classes.

taken together and each separately.

TABLE 6.26

*Sex ratios for non-earning dependants of Non-Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES IN NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES				
	All Classes	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Assam ..	1,298	1,172	1,434	1,583	1,404
Assam Plains	1,286	1,166	1,434	1,576	1,391
Assam Hills	1,445	1,336	1,433	1,683	1,474
Manipur ..	1,042	1,194	944	958	959
Tripura ..	1,531	1,626	1,580	1,736	1,461

The sex ratio for non-earning dependants is slightly lower among the non-agricultural classes than among the agricultural classes, showing 1,286 in the State as a whole against 1,332 among agricultural classes. This also shows the small percentage of women engaged in non-agricultural occupations.

## SECTION V

## CIVIL CONDITION

## 400. Marital Status :

The figures discussed in this section have been extracted from Subsidiary Tables 6.7 and 6.8 which are based on the main Table C-III which has been prepared from the 10 per cent sample selected from the entire population. The 1941

figures are based on a 2 per cent sample taken out at that census, while the 1921 and 1931 figures are based on the entire populations enumerated at those censuses. Table 6.27 below gives the percentage of males and females among unmarried, married, widowed and divorced persons according to the 1951 Census.

TABLE 6.27

*Civil Condition, 1951*

State and Natural Division	Males				Females			
	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Divorced
Assam ..	57	39	4	0	49	41	10	0
Assam Plains	57	39	4	0	48	42	10	0
Assam Hills	59	36	4	1	53	38	7	2
Manipur ..	56	40	3	1	49	38	11	2
Tripura ..	58	38	3	1	43	46	11	0

Divorces are rare and this is clearly reflected in the figures. They are altogether too uncommon to be considered separately for a comparative study. For the State as a whole as well as the Assam Plains their percentage is nil, whereas in the Assam Hills Division we find 1 per cent among males and 2 per cent among females as divorced. 39 per cent of all males and 41 per cent of all females in Assam are married.

The percentage of unmarried males is 57 while that of unmarried females is 49 only. The normal age of marriage is, as is well-known, earlier for females than for males. The percentage of widowed persons among females is much larger than among males, 9.7 against 3.9 respectively which clearly reflects the social customs of the State. The percentage of unmarried persons is higher, both among males (59.1) and females

(52.9) in Assam Hills Division than in Assam Plains where their percentages are only 56.7 and 47.8, respectively. These figures confirm that people in Assam Hills generally marry at a later age than in the Assam Plains. The percentages of married males and females confirm this view. In Assam Plains 39.1 per cent males and 41.7 per cent females are married; the percentages for Assam Hills Division are only 36.2 and 37.5 respectively. The proportion of those who are widowed is slightly lower in Assam Hills, 3.6 per cent against 3.9 for males in Assam Plains and 7.3 per cent against 10.1 per cent for females in Assam Plains. The largest percentage of married females is found in Goalpara (43.9) against 38.6 in Sibsagar; correspondingly Sibsagar returns the largest percentage of unmarried females 53.5 against Goalpara's 42.2. In Assam Hills the largest percentage of married females are found in Goalpara Hills; 49.2 against 33.6 in Lushai Hills; it shows the lowest percentage of unmarried females 50.1 against 56.1 of Lushai Hills.

Here a word of caution is very necessary. It must be remembered that the word "married" does not mean exactly the same thing in Assam as it does in Western countries where it is synonymous with cohabitation. In Assam, as in other parts of India, the so-called infant and child marriages mean nothing but what we would call "engagements" or "betrothals" with this difference that the "engagements" are made by the parents of the parties and are irrevocable. The ordinary Hindu girl wife in Assam returns after her so called "marriage" to her parents house and lives there until puberty when another ceremony is performed and it is not till then that she goes to her husband and becomes a wife in more than name. Unless this fact be remembered the statistics of "marriage" may give a very wrong impression.

Another point that must be remembered while dealing with the figures is that, as pointed out in Section I, the statistics of age are very unreliable and hence the statistics of civil condition by age must suffer from the same defect. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the figures showing the actual or proportionate number of unmarried, married and widowed by sex or religion; it is only when the figures are shown by age groups that they must be accepted with a certain amount of caution.

The main features about the statistics of civil condition in India as compared with Western countries are :—

- (a) the universality of marriage.
- (b) the early age of marriage, and
- (c) the large proportion of widows.

All these features are to be found in Assam though, owing to the presence in this State of a large number of hill tribes and of castes which are of a tribal nature, the general age of marriage is not so low and the proportion of widows is not so high as in other parts of India. A mass of information dealing with the marriage customs and ceremonies prevalent in Assam is contained in the previous census reports of the State—particularly in that of 1911—and it is not necessary to go over this ground again.

#### 401. Number of unmarried persons in last three decades :

It will be useful to examine whether the marital ratio has undergone any change from decade to decade since 1921. The percentage of unmarried persons in each of the decades is given in Table 6.28 given below :—

TABLE 6.28  
*Proportion of unmarried persons, 1921-51*

State and Natural Division	1921		1931		1941		1951	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	54.6	44.9	52.8	43.6	55.9	45.9	57.0	48.6
Assam Plains ..	54.5	44.5	52.4	42.7	55.6	45.2	56.7	47.8
Assam Hills ..	55.2	47.7	55.5	48.7	60.0	52.3	59.1	52.9
Manipur ..	57.0	47.2	57.2	46.5	58.5	46.9	56.3	48.7
Tripura ..	51.9	42.8	49.2	41.6	50.5	45.3	58.0	42.5

Since 1921 a steady rise in the number of unmarried persons of both sexes has been recorded, save for the census year 1931. The figures suggest that the age of marriage is progressively rising. They also illustrate, what is common knowledge, that the age of marriage in the case of males is much higher than in the case of females. Relatively to males, the age of marriage of females seems to have recorded a proportionately greater advance since 1921. The percentage of unmarried males has increased from 54.6 per cent of the total population to 57.0 in 1951, an increase of 2.4 per cent in 30 years, against that of 3.7 in the case of unmarried females, from 44.9 in 1921 to 48.6 in 1951. In Bombay the increase

is as high as 6.1 per cent for unmarried males and 8.5 per cent for unmarried females during the same period. With the spread of education among women, the tendency is likely to be more prominent in future. There is a definite tendency for both males and females to marry later than ever before. The Sarda Act (Child Marriage Restraint Act) is no longer felt to be a hardship to be avoided or circumvented at all costs.

#### 402. Number of married persons in last 30 years:

Table 6.29 given below gives the percentages of married persons among males and females during each of the decades 1921-51.

TABLE 6.29

#### *Proportion of married persons, 1921-51*

State and Natural Division	1921		1931		1941		1951	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam	40	41	42	44	40	43	39	41
Assam Plains	40	42	43	45	41	44	39	42
Assam Hills	40	40	40	40	35	35	36	38
Manipur	39	38	39	38	37	38	40	38
Tripura	44	45	47	48	45	44	38	46

The percentage of married females in 1921 was 41 in Assam from which it rose slightly to 44 in 1931. In 1941 it came down to 43 and in 1951 it stands at the same level as it was 30 years ago. The corresponding percentages for males show that in 1921, 40 per cent of the males were married and the percentage rose to only 42 in 1931, a rise less than that in the case of females by 1 per cent. It came down to 40 in 1941, further declining to 39 in 1951. Thus even if we do not take into consideration the results of the 'Y' Sample as given out by the 1941 census the position in 1951 is that the proportions of married males and females stand exactly where they were 30 years ago. This is particularly true with regard to females, whereas in the case of males there is a slight decline of 1 per cent. The slight spurt in the 1931 figure was due to the Sarda Act from which the position has gradually stabilized itself at the normal level prevailing in 1921.

The pattern in Assam Plains does not differ to any considerable extent from that of the State as a whole, but not so in the case of the Assam Hills Division. In the Assam Hills the percentage of married males was 40, the same as in Assam Plains. It has now come down to 36 against 39 in Assam Plains. On the other hand the percentage of married females in Assam Hills, which was 40 in 1921, has registered a small decline of 2 per cent in 30 years and now stands at 38, which is lower than that for Assam Plains.

#### 403. Number of widowed persons :

Table 6.30 below gives the percentages of widowed persons among males and females during each of the decades 1921-1951 :—

TABLE 6.30

#### *Proportion of widowed persons, 1921-51*

State and Natural Division	No. OF WIDOWED PERSONS DURING LAST 3 DECADES							
	1921		1931		1941		1951	
	Male	Females	Male	Females	Male	Females	Male	Females
Assam	6	14	5	12	4	11	4	10
Assam Plains	6	14	5	12	4	11	4	10
Assam Hills	5	13	5	12	5	13	4	7
Manipur	4	15	4	15	4	15	3	11
Tripura	4	13	4	11	4	11	3	11

At the 1951 Census for the first time the figures have been separated for widowed and divorced persons, whereas they used to be lumped together under one at the previous censuses. The percentage of widowed persons shows a definite decline over the 30 years period from 1921 onwards. The decline is a small one from 6 to 4 per cent in the case of males, but more perceptible in the case of females, from 14 to 10 per cent in Assam. The percentage of the widows in Assam Hills shows a particularly noticeable decline from 13 per cent in 1921 to only 7 in 1951. The decline is particularly noticeable in Cachar, where it has been reduced from 16 to 12 per cent and in Darrang from 14 to 8 per cent. In the Hills District, United K. & J. Hills district shows a remarkable fall from 15 per cent in 1921 to 8 per cent in 1951, which is even more remarkable in the case of Lushai Hills, which has registered a decline of 10.7 per cent during the same period, from 17.6 in 1921 to 6.9 in 1951. These are remarkable figures and their general tendency leaves us in no doubt that the number of widows is definitely on the decline. I am sure the increasing enlightenment in favour of widow remarriage has a lot to do with this tendency. However, we must realise its tremendous effect on the growth of population. The prevention of widow remarriage was so far the only preventive check to the growth of population in India. In 1921 as large as 14 per cent of marriageable persons were "socially sterilized", their number has now fallen to below 10 per cent in 30 years. Though some of the widows were 'illegally fertilized', this did mean a considerable check on the growth of population in Assam and India in the previous decades. The continuously declining importance of this preventive check, though a good augury for social reformers, cannot but cause alarm to the students of Indian demography. The only saving grace is that such a social reform does not stand in isolation but has to be viewed in the context of the entire economic and social life of the community. Thus we can assume that while the community is advancing on certain social fronts, there are likely to be similar tendencies in the same direction, whose outcome will be to reduce the total population growth. One such counteracting factor is the tendency among both males and females to marry at a later age than ever before.

#### 404. Age Distribution of Married Persons :

The age distribution of married persons among males and females in Assam in 1941-51

is as given below in Table 6.31 :—

TABLE 6.31

*Age distribution of 1,000 married persons of each sex*

Age Group	Year			
	1941		1951	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
0-14	13	56	7	30
15-34	451	674	421	673
35-54	424	238	451	259
55 & above	112	32	120	38

The proportion of a generation which ultimately marries is in a sense the fundamental fact about its marriage habits, but another important aspect is the age at which marriage takes place. In the West people marry less and later than in India, where the universality of marriage is a normal phenomenon.

In spite of certain inaccuracy in our age returns these figures confirm the fact referred to in previous paragraphs that marriages are now taking place later and that there is a tendency for them to take place even later than 15-34 group. The figures in the group '55 and over' are the result of a decreasing death rate; the improvement, however, is very small, in spite of an unbelievably large decline in the recorded death rate in the last decade. Both males and females figure show the same tendency. The largest proportion of married persons is found among the males (45 per cent) in the group 35-54 while for the females the same appears among the age group 15-34 (67 per cent) against only 26 per cent in the age group 35-54.

It means that there is a far larger proportion of males than females marrying after the age of 34. Group 0-14 shows a much larger proportion of females than males who marry before the age of 15. Only 0.7 per cent of males but as large as 3 per cent of females in Assam break the law about marrying early. The comparative figures for 1941-51 do show that this tendency is on the decline, from 1.3 per cent for males and 5.6 per cent for females in 1941 to their present proportions. We have here assumed that all persons below the age of 5 are unmarried. The figures of 1941 Census based on the 'Y' sample indicate that some persons below 5 years of age were also found to be married and that their percentage was of the order of 0.1 of the total number of married persons. In other words it

would appear that if the assumption regarding those below 5 years of age referred to above were not made the conclusion regarding a decline in the age of marriage will still be valid.

The position in Assam, however, is decidedly better than in Madhya Pradesh where the figures bring out the alarming fact that about 4.3 per cent of married males and 7.8 per cent of married females are breaking the Sarda Act and where the comparative figures of 1941 to 1951 clearly show that this tendency is on the increase at least in the case of males. The figures in Assam are much lower than in India or Madhya Pradesh, though the Sarda Act is as much a dead letter in Assam as elsewhere. They reveal the social and marriage customs of the different sections of Assam's society. In the Hills males and females proportion of married persons of an age below the prescribed legal limit is much less than half of what we find in Assam Plains Division; 0.3 and 0.7 per cent in the case of males and females respectively in Assam Hills against 0.7 and 3.4 per cent in Assam Plains for males and females respectively. Child marriages appear to be most prevalent in Nowgong and Darrang in the case of males (1.8 and 1.4 per cent respectively) and in Garo Hills (0.9 per cent). They are rare in Sibsagar which shows just 1 person out of every 1,000 married males within 0-14 age group. Regarding females, however, Goalpara shows an unenviable preeminence with as large as 7.1 per cent of all married females within the age group 0-14, which is more than double the average for the Plains Division, with Kamrup as a distant second, 4.7 per cent. Once again Sibsagar (1 per cent) returns the lowest proportion of married females of this age. Accepting the accuracy of the 'Y' sample for 1941, Nowgong reveals a definite increase from 1.3 to

1.8 per cent among its married male children, a solitary exception for all Assam districts which show a definite decline in tune with the tendency revealed by the State as a whole.

The custom of early marriage is definitely on the decline in spite of the law restraining child marriages, not because of it; it is clear that it is only a question of time before child marriages cease to occur, not because of the law but on account of public opinion and the pressure of economic conditions. There is no substitute for enlightened public opinion and fortunately the trend of the figure suggests that public opinion is increasingly setting itself against very early marriage of girls. As we have seen the position is far more satisfactory in Assam Plains. Among the females the drop in the proportion of child marriages is the greatest in Kamrup, where it is of the tune of 3.6 per cent against only 1.1 per cent in Goalpara. Table 6.32 gives comparative figures for the Natural Divisions in Assam, and Manipur and Tripura.

The customs of different communities in regard to marriage have received very full treatment in past census reports, when civil condition was analysed according to religions and castes. In the 1951 census, the basis of the sorting of civil conditions was economic and territorial, not religious. Hence an analysis of any shifting trends in the marriage habits of particular castes, tribes or communities is not possible in the plains districts where the population is not homogenous. The hills districts do lend themselves to such a study which I leave to experts and others who have more leisure and inclination to undertake the same. Table 6.32 given below gives the age distribution of 1,000 married persons of either sex for the Natural Divisions.

TABLE 6.32

*Age distribution of 1,000 married persons of either sex in the Natural Divisions of Assam, Manipur and Tripura*

State and Natural Division	MALES (Age Group)				FEMALES (Age Group)			
	0-14	15-34	35-54	55 & over	0-14	15-34	35-54	55 & over
Assam Plains :								
1941 ..	13	452	425	110	59	682	231	28
1951 ..	7	423	459	118	34	685	248	33
Assam Hills :								
1941 ..	12	444	408	136	18	581	322	79
1951 ..	3	406	451	139	7	595	329	67
Manipur :								
1941 ..	8	432	421	139	19	592	326	63
1951 ..	1	428	414	156	4	530	355	111
Tripura :								
1941 ..	7	479	408	106	64	663	240	33
1951 ..	3	460	418	119	64	652	244	32

#### 405. Married young men and women (aged 15-34) :

As large a proportion as 67.3 per cent of the total married females are within the age group 15-34 constituting by far the largest married group of either sex in any age group. The percentage is the lowest in the case of females in Nowgong (62.4). The proportion is even larger in the case of Assam Plains (68.5) than in Assam Hills (59.5) in the case of females. In this group there is a definite increase practically in all the districts except Nowgong and Lakhimpur, showing definitely that women have been marrying earlier since 1941.

In the 15-34 age group for males, all districts with the solitary exception of Lushai Hills show a decline over 1941 figures, though the number of married females in this group had remained practically the same in Assam and its Natural Divisions. Nowgong shows a drastic decline of 7 per cent in females and over 5 per cent in males, over the 1941 figures, which is difficult to account for as all other Plains districts register an increase with the exception of Lakhimpur showing a small decrease of 0.7 per cent.

#### 406. Middle aged married persons (aged 35-54) :

Like the age group 15-34, this also has increased by 2.1 per cent for females in Assam as a whole. The age group for males shows a more decisive increase over the 1941 proportions. The age group 15-34 for females in Table 6.31 shows that the number of females in this group has shown no tendency towards a fall (674 in 1941 to 673 in 1951). This fact as we have seen in Chapter I is very significant in proving that the fall in the birth rate cannot be explained by any similar fall in the proportion of married females. There, is, however, an increase from 238 to 259 in the age group 35-54 of married females. This age group is further broken up

into age groups 35-44 and 44-54 in Subsidiary Table 6.8. It is seen that in the case of females aged 35-44, there is a very small increase from 17.2 per cent in 1941 to 17.9 in 1951, an increase of only 0.7 per cent and in the age group 45-54 from 6.6 per cent in 1941 to 8.0 per cent in 1951, i.e., an increase of 1.4 per cent. The age group 45-54 is practically of little value in considering the birth rate as the fertility period for all practical purposes ends at 45. Thus we see that in 1941 the number of married females between the ages 15-44 were 846 per 1,000 married women and the number increased slightly to 852 in 1951. Thus the fertile age group of females having shown a slight increase during 1941-51, we have to look elsewhere for an explanation of the great fall in the birth rate as has been actually recorded. In Assam Plains the tendency is the same and shows an increase in married females between 15-34 from 850 in 1941 to 858 in 1951; the increase in the Assam Hills from 800 in 1941 to 812 in 1951.

#### 407. Elderly married persons aged 55 and over) :

Elderly married persons of the male sex have slightly increased in Assam from 112 in 1941 to 120 in 1951; similarly married females of over 55 years of age, from 32 in 1941 to 38 in 1951. In the case of females, Cachar, Goalpara, Kamrup and Sibsagar show a small decline while Nowgong registers an increase of 6.6 per cent, by far the largest among the districts of Assam. Whether it is due to the vagaries of 'Y' Sample I am unable to explain. The recollection of an exact age is most indistinct among elderly persons and I am not sure if some of the variations in the districtwise figures are not the result of erroneous enumeration of such persons on the border line between the last two groups. Table 6.33 given below gives the break-up of married women under different age groups and comparison with 1941 census.

TABLE 6.33

*Ratios of Married Women in different age groups and comparison with 1941 census*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 MARRIED FEMALES										
	0-14		15-34		35-44		45-54		55 and over		
	1941-51		1941-51		1941-51		1941-51		1941-51		
Assam	..	56	30	674	673	172	179	66	80	32	38
Assam Plains	..	59	34	682	685	168	173	63	79	28	33
Assam Hills	..	18	7	581	595	219	217	103	112	79	67
Manipur	..	19	4	952	530	213	217	113	138	63	111
Tripura	..	64	64	663	652	169	167	71	77	33	32



It will be seen that over 67 per cent of the married females are in the main reproductive age group 15-34, and another 18 per cent in the next important reproductive group, *viz.*, 35-44. This is a very significant fact in connection with the population problem that we have as much as 85 per cent of married women in their reproductive ages of 15 to 44.

There is hardly any variation in the figures for

the Divisions in the age group 15-34, the variation being only from 69 per cent in Assam Plains to 60 per cent in the other Division. As for the age group 35 to 44 the percentage varies from 17 in Assam Plains to 22 in Assam Hills. The combined percentage of the fertile age groups of females in Assam Plains therefore varies from 85.8 per cent to 81.2 per cent in the case of Assam Hills.

## SECTION VI

### INFANTS (AGED 0)

#### 408. Infants :

Table 6.34 given below gives the number of infants per 1,000 persons in the general population in the State and in each of the divisions.

TABLE 6.34  
*Infants per 1,000 persons*

State and Natural Division	NO. OF INFANTS PER 1,000 PERSONS			
	1951			1941
	Males	Females	Persons	Persons
Assam ..	18	1	34	29
Assam Plains	19	17	36	29
Assam Hills	14	12	26	26
Manipur ..	15	13	28	25
Tripura ..	18	13	39	19

The definition of infants in the 1941 and 1951 censuses was that of a child below 1 year age. It will be seen from the above Table that at the present census there has been a definite increase in the numbers of infants. This is due to the improvement in infant mortality mentioned earlier in this report. The figures, therefore, indicate that there is a real fall in the infant deaths. Infants have increased from 29 per 1,000 persons of general population to 34. The increase works out at 7 in the Assam Plains and nil for the Assam where actually they have decreased by 0.4. The case of the Assam Hills division is rather deceptive because the 1941 'Y' Sample did not take into consideration the districts of the N.E.F.A., the new district of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills

and the district of Garo Hills. The sample was available only for the three districts of United K. & J. Hills, Naga Hills and the Lushai Hills. In the Plains districts, Goalpara is the solitary exception to register a decrease of 3 during the last decade, all others show increases from 0.2 in the case of Lakhimpur to 20.7 in Darrang and 18.1 in Sibsagar. Sibsagar (46) has the largest number of infants while their number is the lowest in Goalpara (28).

The age recorded at the census was the age in completed years. For infants below one year of age 'O' was written. The number of infants belonging to this age group is of special interest. If the coverage of the population at the census were complete and the recording of age accurately done, it would be possible to work back from the figures of those in the 'O' age group to the probable number of births and, in consequence, to a true birth rate. Unfortunately, several factors prevent this. One of the chronic problems of census taking everywhere is to secure a full return of young children. They tend to be omitted from the enumeration, and there is no reason to believe that India is an exception to a universal trend. The most important factor that vitiates the 'O' age return is, however, extreme inaccuracy in age reporting. The great difference between the number returned as less than one year old and those who had entered the second year of life caused considerable astonishment when first observed.

In 1921, infants less than one year old were to be recorded simply as "infants", despite the earlier speculation about the influence of the longer weaning period on the infant age returns.

In 1931, the age asked for was the age next birthday. Infants less than six months old were to be recorded as 'O' and infants over 6 months as 1. In consequence the gap at age 1 was greatly narrowed, but at the cost of comparability with previous census results. The 'O' and 1 age group in 1931 theoretically comprised only those less than 18 months old, and the 'O' age group only those infants less than 6 months old. In 1941 'O' and the number of months was to be entered. The small size of the 1941 age sample, coupled with possible vagaries in its extraction, may account for the single year age returns 0-4 presenting the appearance of an upturned pyramid. Instead of tapering off at higher ages there are bulges, and each age grouped between 0 and 4 was larger than its predecessor.

#### 409. Single year age returns :

The most noticeable feature of the 1951 single year age returns of infants and small children is the bulge at age 'O' and the gap at age 1. A certain number of these who rightfully belonged to age 1 must have been absorbed either in the age group immediately preceding or succeeding it. The extent to which infants and small children were omitted from the census count cannot be accurately assessed. The single year age returns obstinately refused to taper off significantly at the higher ages for the age returns below 10 years of age, a phenomenon that is against all probability.

#### *Single Year Age Returns of Assam (10 per cent sample population, 1951)*

Single year age returns	Persons
0	30,127
1	23,634
2	29,366
3	31,206
4	30,693
5	30,946
6	28,508
7	25,961
8	29,441
9	18,574
10	28,915

There is probably a tendency for infants and very small children to be omitted at the census. This belief is based on the experience of other countries. It is only after the age of 7 that a marked bias in favour of even numbers as against odd manifested itself, suggesting that the single year age returns of those below 8 are, apart from mix-up at 0, 1 and 2, reasonably accurate, or at least more accurate than any other group of single year age returns. In addition to an expected tendency to omit infants and small children, a variation in the form of the instructions for the recording of infants ages, or in their emphasis would accentuate the tendency to inaccuracy, rendering comparability of the data obtained at successive censuses difficult. It follows from all this that the size of the 'O' age group at successive censuses will not be a completely accurate measure either of the actual number of infants below one year of age or of trends in the birth rate. For purposes of analysis, therefore, the size of 'O' age group cannot be considered in isolation, but must be analysed with the age group 1-4, which succeeds it. On the other hand, since the instructions are common to all parts of the State at the census the relative size of the 'O' age group in different districts probably furnishes a fairly accurate measure of the number of infants in the population, assuming that the tendency to omit infants or to return those aged 1 as aged 0 or as aged 2 was subject to the same general constant errors.

#### 410. Excess of male infants over female ones :

Considering infants by the sex we find that in Assam there are more male infants (18) than the female ones (16). This is so in all districts except Cachar and Darrang where we find a slight predominance of female infants. The largest number of female infants are not in Sibsagar (21) but Darrang (24). In the total population there is a heavy preponderance of males. However, in the 'O' age group there were 181 males to every 163 females, a narrower disparity. The average age of the group would be six months. At birth in Assam State in common with most areas of the world more male infants than female infants are born. The

reason would appear to be that the male infant is more delicate than the female and this is nature's way of redressing the balance. Irrespective of the position at birth, however, other facts in the State (as also in Manipur and Tripura) rapidly take a hand because the female ratio is consistently adverse thereafter at all ages.

The excess of male infants over female ones also corroborates the fact of higher death rate amongst females than amongst males. One of the causes for this, as pointed out before, is that a male child receives greater attention than a female one, for reasons associated with the social life and customs of the people.

#### 411. Infants in the rural and urban population :

Table 6.35 given below compares the number of infants in the general rural and urban population.

TABLE 6.35

#### *Infants in the General, Rural and Urban population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000					
	General Population		Rural Population		Urban Population	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	18	16	18	16	14	13
Assam Plains	19	17	19	17	14	13
Assam Hills	14	12	14	11	13	14
Tripura ..	18	13	18	12	23	23

There is no significant difference as far as infants are concerned between the rural and the general population, but the number of infants in the urban population is definitely lower (27) than that in the rural population (34). These figures go against observed facts because infant mortality in the rural areas is generally higher. The deficiency in the Assam Plains Division is as high as 8, against an excess of 0.7 in Assam Hills. Among the Plain districts, Cachar alone has an excess of 5 in urban areas as against the rural.

#### 412. Infants in agricultural and non-agricultural classes :

Table 6.36 below compares the figures of infants per 1,000 of the population in agricultural and non-agricultural classes :—

TABLE 6.36

#### *Infants in agricultural and non-agricultural population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000					
	General Population		Agricultural Population		Non-Agricultural Population	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	18	16	18	15	18	19
Assam Plains.	19	17	19	16	18	20
Assam Hills.	14	12	14	11	17	14
Manipur ..	15	13	14	12	15	15
Tripura ..	18	13	17	12	23	16

The pattern for agricultural classes is more or less uniform throughout the State with that of general population. Comparing general, agricultural and non-agricultural classes we find only slight variations regarding males but a considerable difference so far as females are concerned. The number of females in non-agricultural classes is as high as 19 against only 15 in agricultural classes and 16 in the general population. In Assam Plains the number is even larger 20 against 16 in agricultural classes and 17 in general population. The excess of females in non-agricultural classes is particularly marked in the districts of Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Darrang. Darrang shows the greatest excess of 13, while the remaining Plains districts actually show a lesser number of females in agricultural classes than in the non-agricultural classes.

Bearing in mind that in most cases the 1941 figures of infants given in column 5 of Subsidiary Table 6.9 are lower than those of column 2 for 1951, the theory of a real fall in the infant deaths gets adequate support. This increase in the number of infants will bring about a corresponding change in the other age groups.

## SECTION VII

## YOUNG CHILDREN (AGED 1-4)

## 413. Young children in General Population :

The numbers of young children, that is persons of both sexes of age 1 and above and below 5 years, per 1,000 of the general population in the State and in its Natural Divisions are given in Table 6.37 below, with figures for the number of such persons in 1941, arrived at on the basis of the 'Y' sample. The reader has already been cautioned in the preceding section against a separate analysis of the 'O' age group without simultaneous consideration of the succeeding age group 1-4.

TABLE 6.37

*Young children per 1,000 of general population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000			
	1951			1941 Persons
	Persons	Males	Females	
Assam ..	131	66	65	129
Assam Plains	132	66	66	130
Assam Hills	127	64	63	116
Manipur	120	53	57	126
Tripura ..	125	64	61	133

In the State as a whole there is a very slight increase in the number of young children, less than 2 per cent, against 21 per cent for infants. The increase is more marked in the Assam Hills Division where it is slightly less than 10 per cent. The theory of a fall in the birth rate during the decade is not greatly supported by these figures. The better chances of survival of the young children on account of larger medical facilities available in villages than before is one of the causes for this situation. In the Plains Division, however, as many as 4 districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong disclose a decline, Nowgong taking the palm with a decline of nearly 7 per cent.

## 414. Young children in Rural and Urban Population :

Table 6.38 below compares the rural and urban population of young children :—  
P./42—42.

TABLE 6.38

*Young children per 1,000 of Rural and Urban population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General Population		Rural Population		Urban Population	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	66	65	67	66	51	50
Assam Plains	66	66	67	66	52	50
Assam Hills	64	63	65	64	47	51
Tripura ..	64	61	65	62	56	51

Like infants, there is a far larger number of young children in rural population than in the urban in Assam as well as its Natural Divisions. Lakhimpur (73) has the largest number of young male children against only 63 in Cachar; young female children in Lakhimpur are equalled by Sibsagar 72, against 60 in Nowgong. One explanation for this is to be found in the larger number of women residing in the rural areas. Darrang has the largest number of males (57) while the reverse is true for Goalpara and Sibsagar, which have the lowest number of males (45). In no district of Assam do we find the urban figures higher than the rural. The survival in this group varies with the living conditions and the medical facilities available in the different areas.

## 415. Young children in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.39 given below compares the number of children in agricultural and non-agricultural classes :—

TABLE 6.39

*Young children in agricultural and non-agricultural classes*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General Population		Agricultural Classes		Non-Agricultural Classes	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	66	65	67	67	61	60
Assam Plains	66	66	68	67	62	61
Assam Hills	64	63	66	65	52	53
Manipur ..	63	57	65	58	52	53
Tripura ..	64	61	66	63	58	52

It is to be noticed that the proportion of young children in the rural and agricultural classes is distinctly higher than either in the urban or non-agricultural classes, indicating that once the infants cross the dangerous period after birth they have better chances of survival in the rural than in the urban areas, or in the agricultural classes than among the non-agricultural ones.

#### 416. Excess of male children over female ones :

It is also to be observed that in this age group males predominate over females, not merely in the general population but also in different categories, e.g., rural and urban or agricultural and non-agricultural. Only in the case of the small urban and non-agricultural population of the Assam Hills Division we find a small excess of females over males.

## SECTION VIII

### BOYS AND GIRLS (AGED 5-14)

#### 417. Boys and Girls (aged 5-14) :

Subsidiary Table C 11 given in Part I-B of the Report shows the distribution of boys and girls per 10,000 persons in 1941 and 1951. Table 6.40 given below compares the number of boys and girls in the general population in the age group 5-14 with the 1941 figures :—

TABLE 6.40

#### *Boys and Girls in general population*

State and Natural Divisions	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS			
	1951			1941
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Assam ..	264	139	125	264
Assam Plains	265	140	125	265
Assam Hills	256	132	124	266
Manipur ..	256	127	129	265
Tripura ..	261	137	124	271

This age group, boys and girls aged 5-14 is constant in 1941 and 1951 in Assam and its Plains Divisions. In Assam Hills Division however, it shows a distinct fall from 266 to 256 per 1,000 persons. The size of this age group in the population is very important. It is this age group that is of the school-going age and it is the females in this age group who will move into the reproductive age groups during the coming decade, with consequent effects on future births. This age group formed roughly one

quarter of the population. In 1941 the under fifteens comprised 42.2 of the population. In 1951 they formed 42.9. There was an increase in the proportion of the age group 0 and 1-4, 5-14 remaining the same. Although this result might be due to the smallness of the sample in 1941 it is significant that the very considerable decennial increases in population that have taken place since 1921 have not been accompanied by any great change in the age composition of the population. This suggests that a major reason for the heavy decennial increases lay in a very considerable decline in mortality, which affected all age groups. Since the general decline in mortality has tended to increase the number of surviving children in the population the recorded decline in the birth rate, even if real, is clearly not of such a dimension as would solve the population problem. The decline in the birth rate—if such a decline has occurred—must have been accompanied by an even steeper decline in the death rate.

Sibsagar (274) has the largest number of boys and girls against 254 in Darrang. In the Hills Division the Naga Hills District (279) occupies the first place against 246 in the United K. & J. Hills District. The districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur show a spurt in their number of boys and girls by 14 and 13, respectively, while there is an equally noticeable decline in Nowgong 20 and 11 in Kamrup. The Khasis and the Lushais show a decrease in their number of boys and girls by 15 and 17, respectively, against an equally noticeable increase of 20 among the Nagas.

We have here to note briefly another bias in the single year age returns relating to females. The desire of young women to move too rapidly out of their teens or to linger too long in their twenties is a feature familiar to census takers in the West. Though it is doubtful whether any such process of female vanity or expediency was at work in the Assam age returns where a female in her teens is as often as not a matron, and a female of thirty would not normally be reluctant to acquire the heightened status of middle-aged matronhood. Considerably more females than males were returned as aged 20 in Assam in 1941 and 1951. Since this result is clearly not a demographic fact, the phenomenon must be attributed to greater inaccuracy in the returns of the ages of females, the exact age of females is a matter of greater ignorance or indifference than that of males. Hence the tendency at all censuses for the females at the favoured numbers of 18, 20 and 22 to outnumber the males.

#### 418. Boys and girls in the rural and urban population :

Table 6.41 given below compares the number of boys and girls in the rural and urban population :—

TABLE 6.41

#### *Boys and Girls in Rural and Urban population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General		Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	139	125	140	126	128	110
Assam Plains	140	125	141	126	130	112
Assam Hills	132	124	133	125	122	106
Tripura ..	137	124	137	124	132	132

The number of boys and girls in the urban population is definitely smaller than that in the rural. This is what one would expect to find as

it is generally only after the middle school stage that the boys and girls left behind in the rural areas by their parents who have migrated to towns for business or professional work join the latter. The Table also shows that like young children, they also have better chances of survival in the rural areas, once they cross the critical infant stage. Sibsagar has the largest number of boys and girls both in the rural (275) and in the urban (256) population.

#### 419. Boys and girls in agricultural and non-agricultural population :

The same pattern as we observed in the case of rural and urban population is repeated in the case of agricultural and non-agricultural classes as shown in Table 6.42; hence the discussion need not be repeated.

TABLE 6.42

#### *Boys and Girls in agricultural and non-agricultural population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General		Agricultural Classes		Non-Agricultural Classes	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	139	125	143	128	128	116
Assam Plains	140	125	144	129	129	116
Assam Hills	132	124	136	127	110	104
Manipur ..	127	129	133	131	98	116
Tripura ..	137	124	140	128	124	107

#### 420. Larger proportion of boys over girls :

It is to be observed that young boys predominate over girls in this age group also, not merely in the State as a whole but also in its Natural Divisions. The excess of boys over girls is 14 per 1,000 persons in Assam; its break-up for the Natural Divisions is 15 for Assam Plains and only 9 for Assam Hills. Kamrup has the largest excess of 20.5 against 7 in Lakhimpur.

## SECTION IX

## YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN (AGED 15-34)

## 421. Distribution of young men and women (aged 15-34) :

Subsidiary Table 6.12, given in Part I-B of the Report, shows the distribution of young men and women (aged 15-34) per 10,000 persons. Table 6.43 below gives the numbers of young men and women per 1,000 of the general population compared with those of the 1941 Census.

TABLE 6.43

*Young Men and Women in General population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS			
	1951			1941
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Assam ..	330	169	161	347
Assam Plains	328	169	159	347
Assam Hills	343	170	173	353
Manipur ..	319	158	161	332
Tripura ..	331	162	169	347

This is by far the largest age group of all, containing exactly one-third of the total population in Assam. The proportion is more or less the same in the Natural Divisions, though very slightly larger in the Hills. Their number in 1941 was 347, from which it was reduced to 330 per 1,000 persons in 1951. This decrease in the proportion of the population in this age group is due to the increase in the proportions of the infants and the lower age groups; it is also significant because it explains the fall in the birth rate as explained in Chapter I. The reduction in the proportion is noticeable in both the Natural Divisions as also in every district except the Lushai Hills, where there is an increase of 10. In Madras we find a decrease in the proportions of this age group due to an increase in the proportions in the highest age groups, which is explained by the Census Superintendent "As longevity increases the proportion in the higher age groups increases and there is decrease in the age group 15 to 34". Lakhimpur registers the highest decrease of 29 per 1,000 against 8 in Kamrup and 19 each in the United Khasi and J. Hills and the Naga Hills.

## 422. Young men and women in rural and urban areas :

Table 6.44 given below compares the rural and urban members of young men and women :—

TABLE 6.44

*Young Men and Women in Rural and Urban Population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General		Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	169	161	165	162	260	150
Assam Plains	169	159	165	160	260	143
Assam Hills	170	173	164	173	257	179
Tripura ..	162	169	161	169	193	156

Young men and women in the rural areas number more or less the same as in the general population; but the total number of young men and women in the urban population is distinctly higher than that in the rural. The proportion of males is very much larger in the urban areas (260) than in the rural areas (165), while the difference in the figures for females in the two areas is very much less,—150 in the urban areas and 162 in the rural. In the urban areas in the State as a whole and in the divisions the proportion of males is far higher than the proportion of females. This is because the male population in urban areas consists of many unmarried persons who have migrated from their villages. They also include those who are still in schools and colleges. The phenomenon is also due to immigration and better medical facilities. It is interesting to find actually a larger number of young women than men both in the general and the rural population in Assam Hills. Lakhimpur (42.1 per cent) has the largest proportion of young men and women of its population on this age group. The proportion is even larger in the United Khasi and J. Hills (44 per cent).



423. **Young men and women in agricultural and non-agricultural classes :**

TABLE 6.45

*Young men and women in agricultural and non-agricultural classes*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General		Agricultural Classes		Non-Agricultural Classes	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	169	161	160	162	194	158
Assam Plains ..	169	159	162	160	188	157
Assam Hills	170	173	155	174	256	169
Manipur ..	158	161	157	153	165	199
Tripura ..	162	169	150	170	197	159

In the State as a whole and its Natural Divisions and districts, there is a higher proportion of young men and women among the non-agricultural classes than the agricultural. This is particularly so in the case of males, whereas the number of females in non-agricultural classes is actually less than the number of females in agricultural classes.

424. **Sex ratio amongst young men and women :**

In the general population, young men exceed young women by 8 per 1,000 in Assam. The excess is nearly 10 in the case of the Plains whereas in the Hills not merely there is no excess but there is actually a deficiency of 4. The United K. & J. Hills District where the matriarchate prevails, young men exceed young women by 11; all other Autonomous Districts show a contrary tendency, i.e., an excess of young women which varies from 22 in the case of Garo Hills to 19 in Naga Hills.

## SECTION X

## MIDDLE AGED PERSONS (AGED 35-54)

425. **Middle aged persons (aged 35-54) :**

For middle aged persons Subsidiary Table 6.13 may be referred to. Table 6.46 below gives the number of middle aged persons, i.e., persons in the age group 35 to 54 per 1,000 persons of the general population, compared with those in 1941.

TABLE 6.46

*Middle aged persons in General population*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS			
	1951			1941
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Assam ..	181	108	73	177
Assam Plains	181	109	72	178
Assam Hills	181	99	82	168
Manipur ..	190	91	99	179
Tripura ..	190	113	77	177

There has been an increase in the number of middle aged persons in Assam and its Natural Divisions over the 1941 figures showing that the average duration of life is increas-

ing, though very slightly, with the general improvement in public health. Darrang, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Cachar actually show a decline, contrary to the tendency revealed by the State as a whole or the Assam Plains Natural Division. Thus only the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong are responsible for such an increase sufficient to over-shadow the reverse tendency shown by the tea districts. The decrease is the greatest in Sibsagar, over 10 per 1,000, whereas Lakhimpur shows an increase of 14, Nowgong 13 and Goalpara 12. The increase in Assam is only 4 per 1,000 persons over 1941 against nearly 15 in Madhya Pradesh.

The increase in the middle aged persons is associated with the abnormal mortality over 30 years ago due to influenza epidemic, the consequence of which was that the relative proportion to the total population of the young persons between 5 to 14 years of age became higher on account of the selective nature of the calamity, as explained in Chapter I. The 5-14 age group was the least affected during the epidemic; while the infants, the middle aged and the elderly persons were comparatively more affected.

This means that there was a hump in the age group 5-14. This hump is now amongst the middle aged persons 35-54 and the rise in the relative proportion of the middle aged persons in 1951 is obviously due to this cause.

#### 426. Middle aged persons in rural and urban areas :

The proportion of middle aged persons found in the rural and urban areas is given below in the following Table 6.47 :—

TABLE 6.47

*Middle aged persons in Rural and Urban areas*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General		Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	108	73	107	74	116	56
Assam Plains	109	72	109	72	118	56
Assam Hills	99	82	98	84	109	57
Tripura ..	113	77	113	77	119	72

Generally speaking, the rural figures are higher than the urban, due to the fact that the growth of economic opportunities and employment in towns naturally draw towards them a larger proportion of the younger group 15-34.

#### 427. Middle aged persons in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.48 gives the proportions of middle aged persons found among Agricultural Classes and Non-Agricultural Classes :—

TABLE 6.48

*Middle aged persons in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General		Agricultural Classes		Non-Agricultural Classes	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	169	161	102	74	125	71
Assam Plains	169	159	103	72	127	71
Assam Hills	170	173	96	85	113	64
Manipur ..	158	161	91	96	88	114
Tripura ..	162	169	111	77	125	79

The proportion of middle aged persons in the State as a whole and its Natural Divisions is lower in agricultural classes than in non-agricultural classes.

#### 428. Excess of males over females in the middle aged group :

Tables given above clearly show that amongst middle aged persons males greatly exceed females in all groups of population, however classified, whether rural, urban, agricultural or non-agricultural. The phenomenon of great excess of males over females is reversed in the Lushai Hills, which is a solitary exception in Assam, where females (85) exceed males (79), and the State of Manipur (99 females and 91 males). The district of Lakhimpur has an excess of nearly 49 males over females.

## SECTION XI

### ELDERLY PERSONS (AGED 55 AND OVER)

#### 429. Distribution of Elderly Persons (aged 55 and over) :

Subsidiary Table 6.14 gives full figures. Table 6.49 which follows gives the number of elderly persons, i.e., persons of the age of 55 and above per 1,000 of the general population, compared with those in 1941.

Elderly persons form by far the smallest age group, 58 per 1,000, excepting infants below 1 who constitute 34 per 1,000. Their number is as high as 80 in Nowgong against 48 in Lakhimpur or 91 in the Naga Hills against 55 in United K. & J. Hills.

TABLE 6.49  
*Elderly persons per 1,000 persons*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS			
	1951			1941
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Assam ..	58	33	25	54
Assam Plains	57	33	24	52
Assam Hills	64	34	30	71
Manipur ..	88	39	49	73
Tripura ..	58	31	27	53

The Table shows an appreciable increase in the last decade for Assam and its Plains and a significant decrease in the case of the Hills Natural Division. Even in the Assam Plains Division, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur show a small decrease while in Nowgong the increase is so considerable as to constitute nearly double the proportion per 1,000 in 1941. This is an extraordinary increase for which the previous history of pestilence and disease are responsible to a certain extent. The great Kala Azar epidemic in Nowgong during the last decade of the 19th century, I am sure, has a lot to do with this phenomenon. For the State as a whole a part of the explanation is the long duration of life consequent on the improvement of public health and the provision of medical facilities.

#### 430. Elderly Persons in Rural and Urban Areas :

Table 6.50 below gives the number of elderly persons in the rural and urban areas :—

TABLE 6.50  
*Elderly persons in Rural and Urban areas*

State and Natural Division	ELDERLY PERSONS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS (PER 1,000)					
	General		Rural		Urban	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	33	25	33	25	29	19
Assam Plains	33	24	33	24	31	19
Assam Hills	34	30	35	30	21	23
Tripura ..	31	27	31	27	18	34

The rural figures are much higher than those for the urban areas. The persons in this group

were of the age of 45 and above in 1941 and naturally it was largest the younger persons who moved to the towns to take advantage of the growth of employment there, thus resulting in a lesser proportion of the older groups found in the urban areas. Goalpara and Darrang are exceptions to this general tendency.

#### 431. Elderly Persons in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.51 given below compares the numbers of elderly persons per 1,000 of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes :—

TABLE 6.51  
*Elderly persons in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes*

State and Natural Division	NUMBER PER 1,000 PERSONS					
	General population		Agricultural Classes		Non-Agricultural Classes	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Assam ..	33	25	35	26	28	21
Assam Plains	33	24	34	25	28	21
Assam Hills	34	30	36	31	24	23
Manipur ..	39	49	40	49	36	47
Tripura ..	31	27	31	27	30	28

The proportion of elderly persons is larger in agricultural classes than in the non-agricultural. This is as one should normally expect to find. Non-agricultural classes which largely concentrate in urban areas consist of a much younger population than in the rural areas where the population conforms to a more or less normal pattern without being affected by the migratory stream from the rural to the urban areas.

#### 432. Sex Ratios among Elderly Persons :

Tables 6.49, 6.50 and 6.51 given above clearly show preponderance of males over females in this age group, showing how men enjoy greater longevity than women. Thus we find that in 1,000 persons of the general population there are as many as 33 men in Assam against only 25 elderly women. The ratio is not very different in Assam Plains though in the Assam Hills Divisions both elderly men (34) and elderly women (30) are in larger proportion, there still being an excess of males over females.

## SECTION XII

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

## 433. Overall Age Structure :

In this chapter we have examined various age groups separately, *viz.*, infants, young children, boys and girls, young men and women, middle aged persons and elderly persons. Let us now examine the overall age structure in Table 6.52 below which compares the age structure of the general population for 1941 and 1951 :—

TABLE 6.52

*Overall Age Structure 1941-51, in Assam*

Age Groups	No. per 1,000	
	1951	1941
0	34	28
1-4	131	129
5-14	264	264
15-34	330	348
35-54	181	177
55 and over	58	54

As already discussed the age group 15-34 constitutes by far the largest proportion (33 per

cent) of the population followed by age group 5-14, constituting over one fourth (26.4 per cent). The proportion decreases as we go down to lower groups, as also go up to higher age groups. "Census data for various countries in Asia and Africa and for most Latin American countries show little change in the age composition of the population during recent decades, even where mortality has been considerably reduced. In fact, such changes as have occurred appear, in most cases, to have been in the direction of increasing the burden of childhood dependency, because of the initial increases in the numbers of surviving children which are brought about by declines in childhood mortality rates."\*

## 433A. Overall Age Structure in Natural Divisions :

The corresponding figures for Natural Divisions of Assam and for Manipur and Tripura are given in Table 6.53, given below :—

TABLE 6.53

*Overall 1951 Age Structure in Natural Divisions*

Age Group	Assam Plains		Assam Hills		Manipur		Tripura	
	1951	1941	1951	1941	1951	1941	1951	1941
0 ..	36	29	26	26	27	25	31	19
1-4 ..	132	130	127	116	120	126	125	133
5-14 ..	265	264	256	266	256	265	261	271
15-34 ..	328	347	343	353	319	322	331	347
35-54 ..	18	178	18	168	19	179	190	177
55 and over	57	52	64	71	88	73	58	53

These figures have already been discussed in this Chapter; they show the same trends as those discussed above for the State as a whole.

\* United Nations Economic and Social Council Findings of Studies on the Relationships between Population Trends and Social Factors, Part III.

#### 434. Overall 1951 Age Structure in Rural and Urban Areas

The striking fact, which emerges from the overall age structure in rural and urban areas

given in Table 6.54, is that of far greater proportion of young men and women in urban areas (41 per cent against 33 in the rural areas), which has already been noted above.

TABLE 6.54

*Overall 1951 age structure in Rural and Urban Areas*

		ASSAM		ASSAM PLAINS		ASSAM HILLS		TRIPURA	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
0	..	35	27	36	28	36	26	30	46
1-4	..	133	102	133	103	129	98	126	107
5-14	..	265	323	269	242	258	228	262	255
15-34	..	327	410	325	404	337	437	330	349
35-54	..	181	179	181	174	182	166	190	190
55 and over		58	49	57	50	65	44	58	52

#### 435. Overall Age Structure among Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Classes :

Table 6.55 given below gives the overall 1951 age structure for the agricultural and non-agri-

cultural classes in Assam and its Natural Divisions. It reveals a slight preponderance of young men and women among non-agricultural classes, (35 per cent against 32 per cent of them in the agricultural classes).

TABLE 6.55

*Overall 1951 age structure among agricultural and non-agricultural classes.*

Age Group		ASSAM		ASSAM PLAINS		ASSAM HILLS		MANIPUR		TRIPURA	
		Agricultural	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Non-Agricultural
0	..	33	38	35	38	25	31	27	31	29	39
1-4	..	134	122	135	123	131	105	123	105	129	110
5-14	..	272	243	273	24	263	214	264	214	268	232
15-34	..	323	351	322	345	329	425	310	365	326	357
35-54	..	176	196	175	198	182	177	188	201	187	204
55 & over		61	49	60	49	67	47	89	84	58	58

The pattern which the above Table reveals is more or less the same except that the proportion of young men and women among non-agricultural classes of Assam Hills is as large as 42.5 per cent against 33 per cent for the agricultural classes.

#### 436. Age Pyramid in Assam :

Table 6.56 given below gives the number of persons, per 10,000 persons in the State as a whole, in each of the age groups specified in column 1 as ascertained at each census from 1931.

TABLE 6.56  
*Age Pyramid in Assam by Sex*

Age Group	GENERAL POPULATION 1931-1951 PER 10,000					
	1931		1941		1951	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
0-9 ..	2,999	3,278	3,038	3,276	2,951	3,208
10-19 ..	1,939	2,126	1,912	1,934	2,000	2,131
20-29 ..	1,760	1,868	1,615	1,859	1,658	1,805
30-39 ..	1,503	1,262	1,514	1,299	1,394	1,212
40-49 ..	946	744	949	773	960	729
50-59 ..	518	426	556	469	547	438
60 and over ..	335	296	416	390	490	477

No detailed comments can be usefully made on these figures, as the 1921 and 1931 figures are those based on the 'smoothed' figures as tabulated at those Censuses. The 1941 figures are based on a 2 per cent 'Y' Sample, while the 1951 figures are based on a 10 per cent sample and take into account ages as actually recorded by the enumerators (without applying any smoothing formula).

It will be seen from the 1951 figures that children aged 0-9 constitute 31 per cent. of the population, while the number of old persons aged 60 and above account for about 4 per cent of the population. The proportion of the population in the working ages 20-60 is about 65 per cent. The decline in the birth rate is reflected in the smaller proportion of persons in the lowest age group while the improvement in the average duration of life is reflected in the increase in the figures in the last three groups.

According to Sundberg, the famous Swedish statistician, a normal population has about one half of its total between the ages of 15 and 50, and the proportion of those above that age to those below it indicates whether the population

is increasing, stationary or decreasing. The youngest of the three population groups must be double the eldest, if the population is to continue to grow; just short of that point, it may be stationary, but if the elder continues to exceed the younger the population would be regressive. It has been considered, that, for Indian conditions, the middle age group should be more appropriately 15 to 40. The percentage of the population in Assam under the relevant age groups are given below :—

Assam Age Group	Percentage	
	Males	Females
0-14	40.5	43.5
15-40	39.5	40.0
Above 40	20.0	16.5

If, as I think, we consider it sound to adopt the groups 15-44 and 45 and over for the last two groups, we shall get the following percentages :—

Assam Age Group	Percentage	
	Males	Females
0-14	40.5	43.5
15-44	44.9	44.1
45 and above	14.6	12.4

Our population is clearly of the progressive kind. The distribution of the population between 3 main age groups under 15, 15 to 64 and 65 years of age and over varies widely in different parts of the world. The age pyramid in Assam and in India generally has a very broad base and a quickly attenuated top. The existence of very large numbers in the lowest age groups and very small numbers in the highest age groups is a result of high mortality and high fertility. In countries with a low fertility and mortality the age pyramid rests on a much narrower base. In the table below percentages of the population belonging to four age groups in Assam, Bombay, Japan and Great Britain are shown.

Age Group	ASSAM	BOMBAY	JAPAN	GREAT BRITAIN
	1951 Census ; 10% sample	1951 Census ; 10% sample	1947 Census ; 10% sample	1951 Census ; 1% sample
Under 15 ..	43.0	39.3	35.4	22.5
15-44 ..	44.1	45.8	44.7	42.7
45-64 ..	10.6	12.4	15.0	24.0
65 and over	2.3	2.5	4.9	10.8

Assam along with Bombay on the one hand and Great Britain on the other represent two entirely opposite types of age structure. Japan, where the birth rate appears to have been falling since about 1923, represents an intermediate stage. The difference between the two kinds of age structure affects profoundly the kind and degree of dependency. Notestein and his associates took the population under 15 years of age to represent dependent children, the population aged 15 to 64 to represent producers, and the population aged 65 and over to represent old age dependants. The selection of these age groups would be somewhat arbitrary in their application to Indian conditions. Children, for instance in rural areas in India tend to play a much more active economic role than they do in the West; while 65 in India is a relatively much greater age. For the vast majority of the population economically useful activity after 55 or 60 is exceptional. Adopting, however, for the sake of argument Notestein's three age groups, and comparing the

Assam and British age structures it will be seen that in Assam most of the dependants were children, while in Great Britain an increasing number of the dependants were old persons. The percentage of the total population of Great Britain aged 65 and over rose from 7.4 in 1931 to 10.8 per cent in 1951. Assam, where the under 15 group is numerous, has a heavy "youth dependency", while Britain which has a high ratio of old persons to the producers has a heavy "old age dependency". Large proportions of children under 15 years of age, minimal percentage of aged persons, and a mean age around about 22 years as in Assam are the result of continuing high birth and death rates.

#### 437. The Probable Future Population Trends :

The facts examined in this Chapter and the discussion on age structure given in Section V of Chapter I are utterly inadequate even to indicate what the probable future trend of population growth of Assam is likely to be. So far, in all the decades of the present century, the growth of population in Assam is mainly due to streams of normal immigration, *e.g.*, tea garden labourers, East Bengal Muslims, and Nepales, now joined by the immense stream of refugees. We are very uncertain regarding all these migration streams except that the tea garden immigration is gradually falling, as Assam depends more and more on 'home grown' labour. Still some tea garden immigration is bound to persist in the coming decade. The Muslim immigration is a very uncertain factor. In Chapter I, we have already examined how East Bengal Muslims continued to pour in irrespective of the administrative and legal bars and hindrances in their way. Even the partition of the country and the independence of India have failed to stem their tide. It is impossible to predict the future course of Muslim immigration except that it will be declining in volume in view of the introduction of the passport system between India and Pakistan from 15th October 1952. One doubts how this symbol of international barrier is going to come in the way of the hardy Mymensinghians and the religious brotherhood of Muslims which makes them ignore considerable personal and family hardships and facilitate the provision of some means of livelihood for their co-religionists. We have



seen how when Hindu refugees were coming away from East Bengal to Assam after the partition, Muslims from East Bengal too continued to come in large numbers. The reverse stream of emigration is of very little importance in this State. The other factor of natural growth of population which is conditioned by the total number of births and deaths is also extremely uncertain. We have already examined how grossly inadequate and unreliable are the vital statistics in Assam and how the present statistics fail to throw any light on the problem of population growth in the past; much less we can use them to surmise the future. The age structure affects not only the amount of dependency, but also the future population growth. Children are born only to women, and generally speaking, to women between the age of 15 and 45. Obviously the number of women of reproductive age is fundamental to the growth or otherwise

of the population. An increase in the number of women in the reproductive age groups in Assam at successive censuses will, in the absence of other factors, such as postponment of the age of marriage or birth control, have a great influence on population growth. The age structure in Assam is such that it has a potential growth far exceeding that of Western countries where fertility has shown a progressive decline. The large numbers on which the age pyramid rests will eventually occupy a middle position, giving birth to still greater numbers. If present trends in fertility and mortality persist, a continuing rapid growth in population seems inevitable. There is at present little evidence of any substantial decline in fertility. The general picture in Assam since 1921 is one of increasing population growth and high fertility, unaccompanied by epidemics, famines or deliberate restriction of numbers.

## CHAPTER VII

# LITERACY

## SECTION I

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

#### 438. General Remarks :

At the initial stage, the Registrar General was of the opinion that it was not necessary to embody an additional chapter on literacy in the State Census Reports. Later on in view of its importance for general public he reversed his earlier decision and decided on including an additional chapter on literacy in the State reports. This departure from the earlier decision shows clearly the importance of literacy data to the general public.

#### 439. Reference to Statistics :

Statistics on literacy which are reviewed in this chapter are based on Main Table C-IV based on 10 per cent slips of General Population excluding displaced persons. It gives literacy figures for selected age groups. Main Table D-VII based on general population including displaced persons shows the livelihood classes by educational standards. Subsidiary Table 7.1, which deals with the progress of literacy, is based on Table C-IV. Subsidiary Table 7.2—Literacy Standards of Livelihood Classes—is based on main Table D-VII. Subsidiary Table 7.3—Educational Services and Research gives separate figures for the teaching staff, apart from the administrative personnel employed in the teaching and similar institutions.

#### 450. Meaning of Literacy :

A person was defined as literate for Census purposes if he or she could read or write a simple letter either in print or in manuscript. Those who can read but not write have been recorded and shown separately in the Table C-IV, although they swelled the ranks of illiterates in the main Table D-VII. This definition was adopted as early as 1911 and has remained the same at every Census since then, and hence the figures are directly comparable with the figures of previous censuses of 1911 and thereafter. It should be noted that in 1941 there was no detailed compilation of census statistics, which was postponed as a war measure. Provincial Table II of the 1941 Census Tables however, gives literacy figures, by thanas, whereas a 'Y' Sample Table compiled much later shows literacy by Age Groups.

Here we should clearly note that what the Census figures tell us is merely literacy in a technical sense; they convey little or nothing about education of the masses for which there is such an imperative need for a young democracy such as the Indian Republic. "Educate your masters"—this advice of Lowe in the House of Commons is as true to-day for India and Assam as it was for England of 1868. Education means "a knowledge and understanding of

life and of man" or in the words of the great Swami Vivekananda, "the art and science of **man-making**." The census figures, therefore, will speak of literacy, which is a key, not even indispensable although useful and desirable, to the door of education, the progress or value of which cannot be assessed by numbers alone. Emperor Akbar was perhaps illiterate according to our present Census definition of the term, so were Shri Ramakrishna and his personal attendant Latu (later known as Swami Adbhutananda), both of whom were ignorant of the three R's; but who dare term these geniuses in far different walks of life 'uneducated'?

#### 441. Accuracy of Statistics :

The census definition of literacy is simple and easily understood by the average enumerators. They were themselves literate at least up to the census standard and were in a far better position to judge illiteracy and literacy than to estimate age or to ascertain the correct mother-tongue of ex-garden labourers. We can, therefore, claim a fairly high standard of accuracy for the record of literacy and it is fortunate that this is so in view of the importance of ascertaining the degree of progress of literacy during successive decades.

The part-time and honorary enumerators could not have been in a position to check up the exact extent of literacy or its absence by subjecting the people concerned to the actual test of literacy, viz., reading and writing a letter, in cases where their literacy was in doubt. In any case, this is necessary in only very few cases.

There were further instructions to the enumerators that anyone who had passed any examination was to be shown as having passed that

examination and the simple symbol, 1 or 2, was not to be used in his case. As a result, we came across numerous cases of persons who had passed the first or second primary classes, for whom the entry was not 1 or 2, but class I, class II, etc. Persons who had not passed examination of class III or higher class of the primary school could not have been fully literate; hence instructions were given at the sorting stage to consider all such cases as of partially literates.

Another important fact should be borne in mind while comparing literacy by age figures of 1951 with those of the 1941 and previous censuses. The latter were subjected to a smoothing formula to offset the observed preference for particular digits especially '0' and '5', to which a reference has already been made in the previous chapter. At the present Census tabulation was carried out on the basis that the censuses should publish information as actually furnished by the people.

In dealing with the proportionate statistics of literacy, the system adopted has been to exclude altogether all children under 5 years of age both from the figures of literacy and from the population on which the proportion of literacy has been calculated. This system, which also prevails in European countries has the advantage of **showing the actual proportion of literates to the proportion of persons capable of attaining literacy**. In subsidiary Table 7.1, therefore, the infant prodigies under 5 years of age, who were returned by their fond parents as literate have been tabulated as illiterate. Unless specifically mentioned in this chapter, the whole of the age group 0 to 5 is excluded from the total population in calculating the proportion of literacy.

## SECTION II

### PROGRESS OF LITERACY

#### 442. Extent of Literacy :

According to 1951 Census the number of literate persons in Assam is 1,634,122 (males 1,303,367; females 330,755) against 841,140 (males 709,944; females 131,196) in 1941. In other words the proportion of literates is 181 per mille (including displaced persons) or 175

(excluding displaced persons) against 111 in 1941. The extent of literacy has thus been raised by 7 per cent in ten years; but even now 82 per cent of the people of Assam are illiterate. There has, therefore, been a substantial increase in literacy, but the proportion compared with European standards is still ridiculously low. It will take one a century to make all citizens of

Assam literate if the progress continues at this rate. Table 7.1 opposite compares the proportion of literates per mille in Assam with the proportions in some other states of India.

It is clear that Assam has no reason at all to be ashamed of itself. It is a happy augury for Assam to maintain its lead over some important states of India, which it enjoyed in 1931. The south-western state of Travancore-Cochin is by far the most literate state in India, with 46 per cent of its population enjoying the benefits of literacy. Bombay and West Bengal compete for the second rank with their literacy round about 24.5 per cent; then follow Madras (19.3 per cent) and Assam (18.1 per cent).

TABLE 7.1  
*Literates per mille in Assam and some other States in India*

	Literates per mille (ages 5 and over)		
	Persons	Males	Females
India	158	235	76
Assam	181	271	78
Bihar	113	184	41
Orissa	158	273	45
Uttar Pradesh	108	174	36
Madras	193	286	100
West Bengal	245	347	127
Madhya Pradesh	133	215	50
Bombay	246	349	126
Travancore-Cochin	458	548	370

TABLE 7.2  
*Literates per mille based on Tables D-VII and C-IV*

NUMBER OF LITERATES PER MILLE AS PER TABLE D-VII							NUMBER OF LITERATES PER MILLE AS PER TABLE C-IV		
Including D.Ps.				EXCLUDING D.Ps.			ALL AGES (5 AND OVER)		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
(1) Assam ..	181	271	78	175	265	73	174	259	77
(2) Assam Plains ..	185	280	75	179	274	70	177	267	72
(3) Assam Hills ..	155	213	94	152	210	92	157	206	105

Table 7.2 shows that the proportion of literates per mille on random sampling fairly approximates to the corresponding figures derived from Table D-VII excluding displaced persons. The far higher proportion of female literacy in Assam Hills Urban is due to the comparatively higher percentage in the urban tracts of Shillong and Aijal.

Assam has only 181 literate persons per thousand. The literacy in Assam Plains is slightly higher 18.5 per cent against only 15.5 per cent in Assam Hills. This includes displaced persons amongst whom literacy is proportionately much greater than is the case in the normal population of Assam. Excluding displaced persons, the percentage of literacy falls to 17.5 per cent, (17.9 in Assam Plains against 15.2 in Assam Hills). For the first time in its history, Assam has secured some compensation by a migration of proportionately more literate group to counter-balance what it used to get so far in its Muslim and tea-garden immigrants, who as a class are far more illiterate than any other part of the population of Assam.

Literacy among males is obviously much higher than among the females. 27 per cent of all males are literate whereas the percentage falls to 8 in the case of females for the State as a whole. Assam Plains shows a similar pattern but in the Assam Hills Division literacy among males is only 21 per cent whereas female literacy (9.4 per cent) is considerably larger than for the State as a whole. This is mainly due to the efforts of Christian missionaries in Assam Hills in encouraging female literacy to a far greater extent than is the case in the Assam Plains, where the efforts of the Christian missionaries were neither so great nor so effective, considering its vast population.

#### 443. Extent of Literacy in Natural Divisions and Districts :

Owing to lesser educational facilities, shifting cultivation or *jhuming* and the total shifting of the villages themselves from one place to another, the Assam Hills Division naturally gets worsted in the battle of literacy with its Plains neighbour. The number of literates per mille in Assam Hills was only 155 against 185 in the Plains. Inspite

of these handicaps, the Lushai Hills ranked first in 1941 amongst all districts of Assam with 129 literates in every thousand persons aged 5 and above, only yielding to the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in respect of female literacy. The proportion of female literates in the Khasi Hills was then the highest in the province and was more than double that in any other district of Assam. In 1951, Lushai Hills maintained its position and has actually surpassed even the United K. & J. Hills district in female literacy also. There are now 228 male and 128 female literates in the United K. & J. Hills district against 462 males and 167 females in the Lushai Hills. Among the plains districts of Assam, Cachar carries off the palm on this occasion with 330 male and 102 female literates, followed close on the heels by Sibsagar with 329 males and 100 females, Kamrup with 305 males and 75 females, Darrang with 252 males and 53 females, Lakhimpur 244 males and 66 females, Nowgong with 243 males and 70 females and Goalpara 228 males and 54 females bring up the rear. The influx of displaced persons has inflated the rate of literacy in Cachar whereas the Muslim and tea-garden immigrants have adversely affected the progress and its rate in the remaining districts.

#### 444. The break-up of Literacy in Rural and Urban Areas :

Considering the distribution of literacy in Assam with its break-up for rural and urban areas, we find that there are 562 men literates in urban areas against 244 in rural areas, the numbers of female literates being 380 and 66 respectively. The proportion of literates is naturally higher in towns owing to better educational facilities, higher incomes and standards of living, capacity to appreciate the benefits and possibilities of education as also willingness to avail of them. There is another reason for higher literacy in urban areas, which is sometimes overlooked. Occupations in urban areas are mainly non-agricultural and specialised in their application and adoption. They afford little scope for the uninitiated, *e.g.*, children and other family members to join in. Hence children cannot do anything else except going to schools. This of course is not so in the rural areas, where children as soon as they are about five, if not younger, can help family cultivation by looking after cattle, providing labour, carrying load from fields and even harvesting, according to their small capacities. In the absence of any taboo in the

rural areas on work by children and absence of recreational facilities, children can join in handicrafts, *e.g.*, weaving, pick up the arts a little and help their elders to swell, to however small an extent, the family income.

Out of every 1,000 people as we have already noted in Chapter II, 954 now live in villages and 46 in towns against 967 and 33 respectively in 1941. In towns there is one institution for every 292 persons while there is only one for as many as 682 souls in the villages. Owing to the continuous drift of the middle class people to towns for bread and better amenities, the village society is without its back-bone. Time has also wrought a change. Soil can no longer feed the hungry mouths owing to diminishing returns and economic depression combined with vagaries of nature such as floods, occasional droughts, earthquakes. People are now not able, nor inclined, to pay for and listen to the recitation of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas which kept the minds of unlettered masses in old days tuned to their ancestral ideals and values. Thus they have not only lost the moorings of their ancient culture and heritage but are pining in vain for the fruits of modern education and civilisation which are beyond their reach.

#### 445. Literacy and Age :

Table 7.3 given below gives numbers per 1,000 of literate boys and girls aged 5-14 in the general population.

TABLE 7.3

*Literate boys and girls aged 5-14*

NUMBER PER 1,000 OF EACH SEX			
	General Population	Literates	Scholars according to Education Report 1949-50
Boys	139	64	106
Girls	125	33	45

#### School-going Children :

Out of 139 boys per mille, 106 are attending schools and only 64 are literate. Out of every 125 girls, only 45 are attending schools and 33 have attained the Census standard of literacy.

There are 5 institutions for every 2,000 males and only 1 institution for every 3,000 females.

#### 446. Male Literacy by Age :

TABLE 7.4

##### *Male literacy by Age Groups per mille*

State and Natural Division	AGED					
	5-9		10-14		15 and upwards	
	1951	1941	1951	1941	1951	1941
Assam	.. 24	15	40	24	195	150
Assam Plains	.. 25	15	42	25	200	149
Assam Hills	.. 14	10	31	24	161	156
Manipur	.. 9	6	29	13	155	74
Tripura	.. 21	4	48	10	139	95

Table 7.4 clearly brings out the deficiency of primary education in the State and its Natural Divisions. The number of literate persons among 1,000 males who were aged 5-9 was only 25 in Assam Plains and barely 14 in Assam Hills on 1.3.51. For the age group 5-14 the position is more satisfactory with 67 and 45 for the two Natural Divisions respectively. The total literacy among all males aged 5 and upwards at this census was 27 per cent in Assam Plains Division and only 21 per cent in Assam Hills. Thus even now three-fourths of the total population of males capable of attaining literacy goes without its benefits in Assam Plains whereas in the Hills Division the proportion is even larger, viz., four-fifths. There is no need to emphasise the obvious except to note that for females the position is naturally much worse.

Consideration of literacy by age groups for rural and urban areas reveals the interesting fact that as many as 56 per cent of people aged 5 and upwards in urban areas of Assam are literate (59 per cent in the urban areas of Assam Hills). For the rural areas, the proportion drops down to 24.4 per cent in Assam (only 18.4 in Assam Hills). In the United K. & J. Hills District out of 228 males who are literate, the break-up for urban and rural shows 606 and 154 respectively, whereas in the Lushai Hills they are 680 and 453. This rural and urban break-up for the State as a whole, its Natural Divisions and some typical districts shows that the percentage of literacy in the urban areas of Assam Hills Divi-

sion is very high. This is mainly due to the location of the State capital at Shillong and the stationing of the Assam Rifles at places like Kohima, Aijal, Sadiya and Shillong.

#### 447. Female Literacy :

Female literacy has been dealt with to a certain extent in the previous paragraphs. It is, however, a matter of such great importance that it merits a special para. to itself. Table 7.5 given below gives the extent of present literacy by age among females and its progress in the last decade.

TABLE 7.5

##### *Female literacy by Age Groups per mille*

State and Natural Division	AGED					
	5-9		10-14		15 and upwards	
	1951	1941	1951	1941	1951	1941
Assam	.. 13	6	20	8	44	23
Assam Plains	.. 15	*	17	*	40	*
Assam Hills	.. 6	6	32	10	67	47
Manipur	.. 2	2	6	1	15	6
Tripura	.. 6	2	10	4	31	15

The actual number of female literates 5 years of age and over stands at 77 per 1,000 females against 37 in 1941. This is a much more rapid rise than in the case of males and for that reason a matter for considerable satisfaction but the disparity between male and female literacy, which has been commented upon by various authorities as well as well-wishers of India, is apparent even in these figures, which contrast with 259 for males. It is, however, a matter for additional gratification that on account of the rapid increase in numbers of school-going children of the female sex the disparity between male and female literacy has declined during the last decade.

We have already seen how there are 167 female literates per 1,000 females in the Lushai Hills Districts, which easily heads the list of districts, followed a long way behind by the United K. & J. Hills District with 128. Among the Plains Districts, Cachar comes first with 102 literate females closely followed by Sibsagar 100, Kamrup 75, Lakhimpur 66 and Darrang 53. As the 1931 Census Report pointed out, the obstacles

\* Not available.

in the way of progress of female education lie in the very structure of Indian society. Early marriages and the difficulty of procuring women teachers are two notable obstacles, "but the greatest is the general spirit of social conservatism, which regards the education of women as a dangerous western innovation which is liable to transform a dutiful affectionate girl into a discontented 'shrew of a woman.' This spirit was very widespread 20 years ago. Several distinguished people and educationists of Assam had no hesitation in informing the then Census Superintendent that education, particularly higher education, is not a good thing for Indian women! Some others considered that present system of female education was radically unsound as it made girls unfit for the domestic duties of their home life. The spirit demanding emancipation of women was only just raising its head at that time, confined as it was to a mere handful of women. Conditions now differ greatly from what they were 20 years ago. Early marriages are becoming less common. Women teachers are coming forward in ever increasing numbers, some of whom cannot get employment and everyone now recognises the need for educating girls no less than boys. The spirit demanding emancipation of women is abroad, particularly after their notable participation in the struggle for the freedom of the country and in the public life of the independent India of today. As a result of the cumulative effect of all these factors, female literacy which has already registered good progress during 1941-51 is bound to increase by leaps and bounds in the next decade.

#### 448. Progress of Literacy :

Tables 7.4 and 7.5 show the progress of literacy in the past decade. For males, literacy has increased from 19 per cent to 26 per cent, whereas in the case of females the increase is from 4 to 8 per cent. Thus the pace of progress in literacy is far greater in the case of females than the males. The impressive relative increase is due to the low initial numbers of literate females in the past. In the Natural Divisions, male literacy in 1951 is 27 per cent against 19 in 1941 in Assam Plains Division, whereas female literacy now stands at 7 per cent. Male literacy in Assam Hills Division has increased from 19 per cent in 1941 to 20.6 per cent now, an advance of mere 1.6 per cent in 10 years.

The progress of female literacy is, however, more commendable from 6.3 per cent in 1941 to 10.5 in 1951. Thus female literacy at the present census is far higher in Assam Hills than in Assam Plains (10.5 per cent versus 7.2 per cent). As I have already stated elsewhere this is due to the efforts of the Missionaries and the encouragement they gave to literacy in general and female literacy in particular. Though Government is now taking over responsibility of education from Missionaries into its own hands, the start which female literacy has received in Assam Hills is likely to be maintained and further improved in course of time, in view of the progressive outlook of the State Government and their determination to do their very best for the uplift of the tribal folk of Assam. We should again note that the rate of progress is underestimated on account of the arrival of a number of illiterate immigrants, Muslims as well as tea garden labourers during the decade. These classes as a whole are generally even more illiterate than the indigenous population of Assam, thereby resulting in depressing the extent as well as progress of literacy in Assam.

#### 449. Extent and Progress of Literacy in Manipur :

There are now 65,895 literates (males 58,933, females 6,962) against 24,905 (males 23,242, females 1,663) in 1941, i.e., out of every nine, one is literate against one in eleven in 1941. The male literates are more than double and female literates more than four times in 1951 in comparison with the numbers recorded in 1941, but still their proportion per mille is as low as 193 and 23 against the corresponding figures of 73 and 8 in 1941. The whole of Imphal was treated as a town at the previous censuses; now it was decided to treat only the portion served by the Town Fund Area as urban. Hence separate figures are not available for its urban area. Manipur State fares most miserably as regards literacy, its extent and progress, particularly in the age group 5-9. The number of literate persons among 1,000 males who were aged 5-9 in Manipur is only 9 in 1951 against 6 in 1941, which is less than half of the present male literacy in the same age-group in Tripura, though Tripura started with a handicap in 1941 when its male literacy for this age group was 4 per mille against 6 per mille in Manipur. The percentage of literacy in the age group 10-14 is only 3 against 4.5 in



Assam Hills and 6.9 in Tripura. The situation was little better in 1941 when with a percentage literacy of 1.1 in this age group it fared better than Tripura's 1.4 per cent. With an overall male literacy of 19.3 against 20.6 in Assam Hills and 20.8 in Tripura, Manipur is decidedly the worst in this respect. It does not do any better even if we take into account the extent and progress of female literacy. The number of literate persons among 1,000 females who are aged 5-9 is so small (2) that it can only be expressed as a fraction of 1,000 and not percentage. The same applies to females aged 10-14 who are barely 6 per 1,000. The total percentage of literates aged 5 and above is only 2.3 against 4.7 in Tripura; even this is a considerable advance on the 1941 position when the percentage was even less than 1,—0.9 per cent to be exact.

#### 450. Extent and Progress of Literacy in Tripura :

There are now 99,199 literate persons, *i.e.*, one in every five in the State. Male literates are one in five and females as few as 1 in 21 only. The proportion of literacy is higher in urban areas as in the case of other States (325 males and 370 females). The proportionate female figures in the age group 5-14 are much higher than the corresponding male figures. This is probably due to the proportionately higher number of female literates among displaced persons.

The highest number of male literates (531) are in Class IV. The next highest group is Commerce (501) followed by Transport (410). Class VIII contains only 347 males.

Tripura enjoys only 20.8 per cent male literacy among those aged 5 and upwards which is slightly greater than that of Assam Hills Division or Manipur. If we consider literacy only among those aged 15 and upwards, Tripura with 13.9 per cent comes off worse than even Manipur (15.5) or Assam Hills (16.1). Tripura again gives a better showing when we consider literacy by age group among males, 21 among 1,000 males aged 5-9 against 9 in Manipur and 14 in Assam Hills. Male literacy in the age group 5-14 is the highest in Tripura of all States and Natural Divisions treated in this report. The number of literate males per 1,000 who are aged 5-14 was 69 in Tripura against 64 in Assam (67 in Assam Plains and 45 in Assam Hills) and 38 in Manipur.

Its female literacy is slightly better than that of Manipur. The percentage of literacy per 1,000 females aged 5 and upwards was 4.7 in Tripura against 2.3 in Manipur, 10.5 in Assam Hills and 7.2 in Assam Plains. Their relative position remains the same when percentage of literacy among females aged 15 and upwards is considered. It is 3.1 in Tripura against 1.5 in Manipur, 6.7 in Assam Hills and 4.0 in Assam Plains. The number per 1,000 of female literates in the age group 5-9 was 6 in Tripura against 2 in Manipur and 6 in Assam Hills, but the number of female literates per mille of the age group 10-14 is so low (16 only) that it is easily surpassed by the Assam Hills (38).

#### 451. Literacy among Livelihood Classes :

Subsidiary Table 7.2 gives literacy standards of Livelihood Classes based on main Table D-VII. Table 7.8 below gives percentages of illiterates and literates in each livelihood class in Assam.

TABLE 7.6

*Percentages of literates and illiterates in each Livelihood Class in Assam*

Class	Literates		Illiterates	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
I	27	6	73	94
II	20	4	80	96
III	12	3	88	97
IV	51	24	49	76
V	18	6	82	94
VI	52	23	48	77
VII	52	33	48	67
VIII	45	25	55	75

The Table clearly reveals the fact we have noticed so often before, *viz.*, that male literacy is much higher than female literacy. This is so in all Livelihood Classes, without any exception whatsoever. As a rule literacy among agricultural classes is lower than among non-agricultural classes. Class IV is an exception among agricultural classes due to the higher standard of living of absentee landlords living in urban areas who comprise this Class. Among non-agricultural classes, Class V, *i.e.*, Production other than cultivation, has male and female literacy resembling more closely to an agricultural class than a non-agricultural one. The

reason is plain, *viz.*, this class is rural and agricultural in its scope concentrating as it does on rural handicrafts and tea plantations which are themselves both rural and agricultural. Against a total literacy of 18 per cent for the State as a whole, Class III, *i.e.*, agricultural labourers show the lowest literacy of all, *viz.*, 12 per cent among males and only 3 per cent among females. It is a happy sign that Class I, which is by far the most important in agriculture, *i.e.*, cultivators of owned land, has a male literacy percentage (27), which is considerably higher than the State average, while its female literacy is only slightly lower. Female literacy in Class VII is as high as 33 per cent.

Class VII, however, is a very small class. Then comes Class VIII with 25 per cent female literacy, closely followed by Class IV with 24 per cent. Regarding male literacy, however, Classes VI and VII, *i.e.*, Commerce and Transport, are outstanding with 52 per cent each, closely followed on their heels by Agricultural Class IV with 51 per cent. Class VIII (45 per cent) comes thereafter.

#### 452. Analysis of Literates by Educational Standards :

Those who have passed the middle school examination are the largest (12 per cent) in Agricultural Class IV for females followed by Transport (11). Other services and miscellaneous sources (9) and Commerce (9). Among those who engage in cultivation, Cultivators of owned land constitute 2.7 per cent which is greater than the proportion (2.4 per cent) which we find even in non-agricultural Class V, *i.e.*, Production other than cultivation. The number of females who are literate up to the middle school standard and above is the largest under Transport where it constitutes 5.3 per cent of the total number of females against 5 per cent of females under Class VIII, 2.5 per cent under agricultural Class IV and 2.1 under Commerce. Others are so small that they can only be expressed as a number per 1,000 females. Then we get 7 for Production other than cultivation, 3 for Owner-cultivators and 2 each for Cultivators of unowned land and Cultivating labourers.

Literacy upto middle school or school leaving certificate standard is naturally the highest among Other services and miscellaneous sources which include educational departments. Here they

constitute 5 per cent of the total number of males. The next largest proportion is under Commerce with 2.4 per cent under Agricultural Class IV (this is of course excluding the small class under Transport, where the percentage is as high as 7.6 for males). For others the figures are so small that we have to content ourselves by expressing them per 1,000 only. Thus those males who have passed middle school are only 8 in Class V, 3 in Class I and 1 each in Classes II and III. Female literates up to this standard are so few that we cannot even express them as a fraction of 1,000. Instead here are the overall figures : 189 for Class I, 51 for Class II and 4 for Class III. Those who are literate up to Intermediate in Arts or Science are naturally infinitesimal in the cultivation Classes I, II and III. They are prominent in males of Class VIII, numbering 13 per 1,000 males, followed by 11 per 1,000 males under Transport and 7 under Agricultural Class IV.

#### 453. Degree and Diploma Holders :

Naturally their numbers are largest under Class VIII which include services and professions. There are as many as 4,668 graduates in Arts and Science under Class VIII (4,218 males and 450 females) followed by 556 under Commerce, 506 under Production other than cultivation and 443 under Transport. The presence of as many as 489 graduates in Arts and Science under Class I needs be explained. They constitute the unemployed and inactive sons of agriculturists whose families are engaged in cultivation *plus* those graduates in Arts and Science whose whole-time-occupation is other than cultivation of owned land but who derive a larger income by getting their lands cultivated by others, and who are, therefore, included under Class I. The same argument will apply for the presence of as many as 1,363 teachers under Class I, whereas the number of teachers under Class VIII, which includes the teaching profession itself, is only 1,072. Their large numbers under Class I should not raise visions of post-graduate diplomas or degrees in teaching but merely those who had passed out from Guru Training Schools. These are mostly employed as primary school teachers and would have been included in Class VIII under teaching profession but for the fact that they earn a larger amount of income from their family lands than the pittance they get as primary school teachers from

the Education Department or local bodies. It is often criticised in certain quarters that the modern institutions moulded on Western lines turn out young-men who sadly lack in discipline, sense of dignity of labour and self-help which were ingrained in the students through practical and hard work at the Brammacharya stage in the system of education in ancient India. Various Livelihood Classes are maintaining a number of literates but whether they are being maintained as active workers or parasites there is no means of knowing. Overcrowding in the employment market is an ominous contra-indication. On an enquiry as to the possibility of employment of one graduate and one Engineer under Class I (Cultivation of owned land) in Garo Hills the Deputy Commissioner replied, "While I can identify the graduate who is earning his livelihood by cultivation necessitated by some physical incapacity, I am afraid I cannot place the engineer anywhere. It is very likely that the enumerators showed a mere mechanic or some gun repairer who mainly depends for his livelihood on cultivation as an engineer".

#### 454. Educational Services and Research :

Subsidiary Table 7.3 shows that out of a total population of 9,043,707 only 2,119 are employed as professors, lecturers, teachers and research workers in higher institutions like colleges and the University. The number of females among this is as small as 164 against 1,955 males. The number of professors, lecturers and teachers other than those employed in higher institutions mentioned before is less than 10,000 for the State as a whole. Out of the total number of 9,884, 8,404 are males and 1,480 are females. Apart from them a further 1,829 souls (1,589 males and 240 females) are employed as managers, clerks and servants of Educational and Research Institutions including libraries and museums, etc. Assam Hills contains very few numbers under the first and third categories. I am surprised to find nil figures under females among lecturers and professors of colleges in Assam Hills Division. As there is the Lady Keane College in Shillong employing a number of lady professors, this is due to some mistake either in enumeration or tabulation. I should not be surprised if the tabulation error was due to the way in which sex is written briefly in Assamese which can easily lead to mistakes unless a sorter is very

careful. The number of professors, lecturers, teachers and research workers employed in Universities, colleges and research institutions is 22 males per 100,000 of population, whereas professors lecturers and teachers other than these constitute as many as 93 males per 100,000 of population. The number of females is as small as 2 in the first category and 16 for the second. Table 7.9 given below summarises the discussion.

TABLE 7.7

#### *Number of Professors, Lecturers, Teachers and Research Workers.*

State and Natural Division	Professors, Lecturers, Teachers and Research Workers employed in Universities, Colleges and Research Institutions			Professors, Lecturers, Teachers and Research Workers other than in column No. 2		
	Total	Number per lakh of population		Total	Number per lakh of population	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Males	Females		Males	Females
Assam ..	2,119	22	2	9,884	93	16
Assam Plains	2,095	25	2	7,509	83	13
Assam Hills	24	2	..	2,375	154	37
Manipur ..	..	..	..	938	147	15
Tripura ..	..	..	..	937	119	27

#### 455. Ideals of Education :

Seventy three per cent of the people live on agriculture. Whatever change is introduced in the present system of education it should produce, without violently uprooting them from their social or religious environment, a better class of agriculturists who believe in "Villagism" to use an expressive and picturesque word used by Shri J. C. Kumarappa. It should also provide for an all-round development of different classes of people, for we cannot create a first class nation from third class material. It will not be out of place to reproduce here portions from an interesting article by Williard Price on Education in Japan which he described as 'the right arm of manifest destiny' :—

"No Nation expects more of education. And with good reason. Education made Japan. Education has put her on a par with other great Powers. May it not, during the next century, carry her beyond them? For the unknown, but not undreamed, of, triumphs of the coming age,

super-education will be necessary. Therefore, Japan is undertaking intensive education with a Spartan rigor and zeal unmatched in history.

"The educational task that has been carved out is prodigious. Japan is the first nation to adopt as a deliberate educational policy the synthesis of all the World's knowledge. All that the East knows, all that the West knows, Japan is determined to know. She shall be the interpreter between Orient and Occident. She shall not be an Eastern Power nor a Western Power but a World Power.

"Of all the Japanese children of school age 99½ per cent are in school. No great nation in the world has a higher literacy than Japan. No nation spends more money on schools in proportion to its population and wealth. And no other nation has so swiftly mastered the lessons of past centuries and alien cultures.

"Contrary to cliché, the Japanese are not-imitators. They are assimilators. Nothing has been taken over as it is. Everything has suffered a sea-change into something rich and strange, something essentially Japanese, suited to the temperament of the people.

"Primary school is compulsory. The higher schools are not and only 10 per cent of primary school students ever see the inside of a middle school. When middle school graduates bend over their high school entrance examination papers, they do it with the bitter knowledge that only one in fourteen can hope to pass. And of high school graduates who take university examinations, a third will get through.

"It is also difficult for a Japanese to learn foreign languages, since they are not all cognate with his own. But he must learn them, and many of them do it, not in the academic fashion of the Western student, but so that they can actually use them in daily conversation and communication. Industrialism requires the languages of industrialism. And foreign trade will go to the trader who can understand the speech as well as the needs of his customers.

"The strain of preparing to meet all the world on its own terms means physical breakdowns, nervous disorders, a frightful toll of tuberculosis, and a suicide cult. An English student would hardly commit suicide if he failed to pass an

examination. But education means everything to the Japanese. His family is probably undergoing severe privation to send him to school for there are no scholarships. If he repeatedly fails he cannot bear the disgrace. There are more than three student suicides a year.

"Where the educational strain does not break a man, it makes him. The Japanese educated mind is a precision machine. It can be geared to any problem and will grind away at it with an impartial zeal. It has been disciplined to go on and on, without fatigue.

"The body too has been severely disciplined. Dormitory life is monastic, the rooms chilly, the food meagre. Students, no matter how rich, are expected to share the simple life of their teachers.

"Physical training in Nippon's schools is rigorous, and has been credited with increasing Japanese stature one inch in the last thirty years. Bodies are built that will endure Manchurian winters, and tropical heat. A ju-jutsu school in Tokyo holds its classes at 4 A.M., during the coldest winter months and at noon during the hottest summer days. In all schools, military training is compulsory. Whereas four-fifths of American teachers are women, four-fifths in Japan are men and these men are all soldiers. Normal school is so akin to an officers' training camp that graduates are required to spend only one year instead of the usual two in the army. They come out of school trained soldiers. These soldier-teachers start inculcating the soldier-spirit in their youngest charges.

"The chief outcome of all this is not mere physical toughness, but an ethical edge that will cut through any obstacle. Plain living, hard schooling, unquestioning obedience, the habit of application, the passion of 'patriotism' (a word and sentiment the polite world had supposed to be demoded), and the code of death rather than surrender combine to make men who are obtuse to discomfort. They seem not to know when they are cold, hungry, weary. And every quality that will serve them in war serves them equally well in the industrial conflict now under way. For industry is military. It is manned by soldiers. The soldiers, it must be remembered, are not a class apart in Japan. They are Japan. Every able-bodied man is a soldier, subject to

a call to the colours, and in the meantime enrolled in the industrial army. Japan's economic march is being made by soldiers, disciplined, hardened, intensively trained."

This long excerpt on education in Japan is not given as a measure of my complete agreement but merely to draw pointed attention of the thinking sections in Assam and elsewhere to the seriousness with which the problems of education have always been treated in Japan. It may help our educationists to arouse the youth of Assam and India to a balanced and serious approach to their education. Of course our ideals of education in India down the ages have been different from those adopted by Japan. Ethical, moral, religious and spiritual aspects of one's character and personality can never be forgotten by a nation who has adopted the great motto "*Satya meva jayate*" Truth alone triumphs—Truth, which has been declared by all Indian sages and rishis down the ages to be on and indivisible. "*Ekam sat vipra bahu-dha vadanti*" truth is one, sages know it by many names—say the Upanishads. Also we must not forget the aesthetic side of education, with an introduction to the great achievements and master-pieces of various arts, which at present is almost entirely neglected. In view of the wide spread under-nourishment and mal-nutrition prevailing in our country, we shall also have to take particular care about our racial constitution and see that physical culture (either by games, exercises or yoga) of our youth is given its due and vital role in any system of national education. Merely academic aspects, e.g., book learning and memory training which can at best produce a white-collared gentry or administrative staff should be relegated to the back-ground while technical, scientific and craft education should be brought into their deserved prominence.

#### 456. A brief review of educational progress in Assam in the last decade :

The whole educational structure of this already educationally backward province was badly shattered by the Second World War. Defence activities totally eclipsed and suppressed cultural and educational activities. This was mainly due to the taking over of the buildings of many schools, High Schools and Colleges by the military for war purposes throughout the State where

no other suitable buildings were readily available on account of the restrictions on building standards imposed by the constant threat of earthquakes. Education was almost struck off from the list of important State activities. Not to speak of educational improvement and expansion, even the normal work of education was grievously arrested during the period from 1941 to 1945. As victory came within sight and post-war planning began to be taken up by the Government of India, the Central Advisory Board Plan, better known as the Sargeant Plan came out in 1944. In Assam, however, a serious attempt to advance the cause of education was made only after the advent of the Congress Ministry to power in early 1946.

#### 457. Policy changes and progress of education in Assam :

##### 457A. Primary Education :

The control of primary education was transferred to a statutory body with a view to make it universal and compulsory in the plains areas of the State. Assam Primary Education Act of 1947 was passed, according to which a State Primary Education Board was formed with a School Board for each sub-division and the Deputy Inspector of Schools as its Secretary. The control of the primary education was taken away from the local bodies and transferred to these new authorities. Primary education is being gradually made compulsory under the Act, till today it covers an area of 288.15 sq. miles including 11 towns and 2,637 villages with a total population of 1,044,901. Thus the scheme of compulsory primary education has covered 1/9th of the total area, half the total number of towns and 1/7th of the total number of villages, embracing within its scope 1/6th of the total population. During 1948-49 alone as many as 1,477 new schools were established. As a result there are today over 9,110 schools in the Plains districts of Assam, with 13,402 teachers and 512,826 scholars receiving education. Thus nearly 50 per cent of our total child population is in schools, a fact which has been strikingly corroborated by the findings of the sample survey conducted in 4 districts by the Statistical Department of the Government of Assam. Starting of Guru Training Centres in each of the plains sub-divisions to train the lower primary teachers, award of scholarships to tribal students, increase in the pay of primary school teachers

and provision for the adequate training, not to talk of the starting of middle schools in some villages are some of the fronts on which considerable advance has been registered by the Government in the latter half of the decade.

#### 457B. Basic Education :

Government have also taken steps to introduce basic education in Assam on the lines of the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education. Six Training Centres were started at Shillong, Udarband, Titabar, Sootea, Raha and Dudhnai. 75 teachers, among whom 17 were women and 15 from the Hills were sent for training at Sewagram and Jamia Milia in 4 years. Basic schools were started from March 1950. 85 primary schools have been taken over and converted into basic schools where first two grades have been introduced. Two senior basic schools at Shillong and Raha were started. The total number of pupils in these schools is 5,229 of whom 1,917 are girls. The withdrawal of the Central grant on post-war development schemes after the end of the financial year 1949-50 gave a set-back to this picture of progress. A scheme of converting six aided High Schools into academic High Schools was given up. The Government has, however, decided to persist in its present policy to gradually convert the lower primary schools into junior basic schools and middle schools into senior basic schools. Provision for basic trained teachers is not over-looked.

#### 457C. Secondary Education :

- (1) The principles of grant-in-aid of High Schools were revised with a view to placing the schools on a better footing and also to improve the pay scale of the teachers.
- (2) Arrangements were made for the introduction of vocational subjects and the teaching of Hindi in High Schools.
- (3) For the development of education in Tribal areas a scheme for provincialisation of some existing schools and establishment of new schools under Government management was put into operation.
- (4) Abolition of the teaching of English up to class VI of High and M.E. Schools has been decided upon and the teaching of English in Class III has been already

abolished. Class III has been detached from the High Schools and M. E. Schools and the secondary course has thus been reduced from 8 to 7 years course.

- (5) Liberal provision has been made for the grant of scholarships and free-studentships to the tribal and the scheduled caste students.
- (6) The establishment of a secondary education board is receiving consideration of Government.

In 1945-46 the number of Secondary Schools of all types in Assam including Sylhet was 1,019 and the number of pupils attending these schools was 134,157. The corresponding figures for 1949 and 1950 in the reconstituted Province were 1,071 and 1,171 and 172,871 and 187,871, respectively. Today Secondary Education has come within the reach of even the remotest villages of the State. Until very recently facilities for Secondary Education existed only in the sub-divisional towns and a few large rural centres. Total Government expenditure on Secondary Education rose from Rs. 2,211,271 in 1945-46 to Rs. 4,450,908 and the expenditure on account of grants-in-aid rose from Rs. 756,228 in 1945-46 to Rs. 2,355,337 in 1951-52.

The grant-in-aid system was extended to more secondary schools in the State. With a view to giving relief to the employees of Aided High Schools the principles of distribution on grants-in-aid were revised. Under the revised principle so far as Aided High Schools are concerned every school will be able to pay its Headmaster the minimum salary of Rs. 100 p.m., the Asstt. Headmaster Rs. 90, trained and Honours graduates or M.As. or M.Sc. Asstt. teachers Rs. 90 and graduate teachers Rs. 80 undergraduates Rs. 60 and matriculates Rs. 50.

A Curriculum Committee appointed by Government sat in October 1950, and the new curriculum was so planned as to regulate the destiny of our primary and secondary education for some years to come to fit in with the new set-up.

#### 457D. University and Collegiate Education :

In 1946 the Congress Government soon after its assumption of office took up the question of establishment of a University in Assam in right earnest and prepared a bill for the purpose.

Earnest action was already started in 1945 by the late Shri Bardoloi. The bill was passed into law in 1947 and the University of Gauhati came to function from January 1948, and took over the control of collegiate Education in the State. The post-graduate classes in Botany and Economics started in Cotton College, Gauhati, in 1947-48, were transferred to the University. The Earle Law College, Gauhati hitherto maintained by the Government was also transferred to the control and management of that body. The Government gives a recurring annual grant of Rs. 500,000 to the University in addition to a large non-recurring grant made to the University for buildings, equipments, etc., during these years.

The most important features of Collegiate Education are the expansion of Science Department of the Cotton College, re-organization of the Cotton College library, provision of liberal grants to non-government college for the development of science classes, formulation of a uniform policy for giving maintenance grants to non-government colleges, which are playing a very important part in spreading higher education in the State.

According to the new scheme of grant-in-aid no aided College will get less than Rs. 1,000 p.m. and no teacher less than Rs. 175 p.m. Adequate provision has also been made for building, equipment, fee remission, etc.

There were 23 Arts Colleges with an enrolment of 5,014 in undivided Assam. To-day in the truncated Assam we have got 20 Arts Colleges with an enrolment of 7,600 students. The Government expenditure on non-government Colleges increased from Rs. 66,920 for 23 colleges in 1946-47 to Rs. 352,468 for 17 colleges (3 colleges remaining unaided) in 1951-52.

#### 457E. Introduction of Social Education :

The Government of Assam decided as early as 1947 to supplement mass literacy campaigns by visual education. Accordingly 2 G.M.C. trucks were purchased for Department in 1947 fitted with 35 mm. projectors and generators for showing educational films in big mass rallies. P/42-45.

In 1949 the Central Advisory Board for Social Education raised the number of literacy centres to 440 and that of aided libraries to 312. A separate branch of Social Education Department was instituted and placed under the general guidance and supervision of the D. P. I. in order to co-ordinate different aspects of education.

It is only about a year since the scheme of social education was launched. It set itself the four-fold task of imparting general education to adults, including the organisation of libraries in the State providing courses for citizenship and encouraging recreational activities, of introducing handicrafts and cottage industries through social Education Rallies and Exhibitions and finally in improving method of agriculture by the organisations of 'Young Farmers' clubs. Excepting the last, substantial progress in the other three directions was made even within the short span of one year.

Four to five social education centres have been selected in each sub-division for the introduction of handicrafts. Bamboo and cane works, pottery, net-making, weaving and spinning have been found very popular. Local crafts and industries were encouraged by organising the rallies and exhibitions at Kakrapara (Boko, Kamrup), Barapujia (Nowgong), Chelenghat (Jorhat), and Sadiya (N. E. F. A.).

Persons who were made literate during the years 1949-50 number 21,428 against about 10,000 each in the preceding two years. The hill areas have now been included within the field of social education and some of the best centres are reported to be functioning in the tribal areas both of the hills and the plains.

#### 457F. Introduction of N. C. C. Scheme-military in Schools and Colleges since 1948 :

The Government of Assam concentrated their efforts on strengthening and consolidating the existing units which consist of two units of the senior division and nine troops of the junior division. The sanctioned strength for the senior division units is 469 Cadets, 315 in the 1st Bn. N. C. C. Gauhati and 154 in the



Jorhat Indept. Coy. N. C. C. While Jorhat indept. Coy. N. C. C. was maintained up to sanctioned strength, enrolled strength of 1st Assam Bn N. C. C., Gauhati, was 182 only. Nine troops of the Junior Division allotted to 19 High Schools are functioning at present. A number of training and refresher courses have already been conducted and a successful annual training camp held in early 1951, both for junior and senior divisions.

#### 457G. **Education in backward areas :**

Greatly increased attention to the progress of education in the hill areas, tea gardens and tribal areas in the Plains as well as the Hills is another important feature of the post-war educational policy of the Government. Under Article 275(A) of the Constitution, the Government of India are giving grants to Assam for the spread of education in the tribal areas. Grants-in-aid, scholarships, provincialisation of some schools are some of the steps adopted to further progress in these directions.

#### 457H. **Technical Education :**

There were only two government technical Schools in Assam prior to 1946. Both of them suffered heavily due to the war, the one at Kohima was completely devastated by the war and the other at Jorhat was taken over by the Army to house their workshop during the years 1942 to 1945. Thus it will not be an exaggeration to say that technical education in Assam was at its lowest ebb in the year 1945. With the advent of popular government, technical education in Assam saw a bright period of expansion and improvement unprecedented in the past. Technical schools which were under the administrative control of the Department of Industries were brought under the newly created Department of Technical Education with the Director of Public Instruction as the Secretary of the Department in 1948 in order to co-ordinate Academic and Technical Education in a much more systematic and scientific manner recommended by the Central Advisory Board of Education.

At present there are four Government Technical Institutions in Assam. First is the H. R. H. The Prince of Wales Technical School, Jorhat,

which is the premier technological institute in Assam. The existing courses in this institution were upgraded in 1948 and 4-year diploma courses introduced in mechanical, electrical and automobile engineering. The school is being gradually improved with a view to turn it into a College of Engineering and Technology at a later stage. Since 1950, a number of certificate courses have been introduced to satisfy the growing demand for skilled labour throughout the State. There is a separate branch of this technical school functioning at Nowgong.

Secondly, there is the Fuller Technical School at Kohima, which was completely devastated by the war, and had to be restarted. It has also been upgraded and courses in mechanics are introduced.

Thirdly, there is a Civil Engineering School at Gauhati, started in the year 1948 to satisfy the great demand for trained overseers in Assam. Since January, 1951, the administrative control of the school has been taken away from the Public Works Department and vested in the Department of Technical Education.

Fourthly, the Industrial Training Institute at Jorhat is run by the Government of India towards which the Government of Assam contributes 40 per cent of the running expenses. This institute has a varied scope of training which is being imparted to ex-servicemen, refugees as well as indigenous persons for two years in either technical or vocational subject in order to enable them to take up the trade for earning their livelihood.

Help to the Don Bosco Technical School at Shillong, award of scholarships to the tribal students for securing admission to these schools are also some of the activities undertaken by the Government. The amount provided for technical education has increased from Rs. 2.1 lakhs in 1948-49 to Rs. 6.1 lakhs in 1951-52.

To sum up, Assam has taken considerable strides in the latter half of the last decade for improvement in the educational field. Table 7.10 giving the figures of actual expenditure incurred by the Government of Assam on education in Assam bears a striking testimony to the efforts of the Government in this direction.

TABLE 7.8  
*Actual expenditure on education in Assam (in lakhs of Rupees)*

		1945-46	1946-47	1947-48	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51
University Education	..	6.79	7.89	12.36	11.84	11.31	16.73
Grant-in-aid	..	0.58	0.67	0.85	1.92	2.28	1.84
Secondary Education	..	22.11	24.73	24.15	28.99	39.52	40.35
Grant-in-aid	..	7.56	8.89	9.38	15.43	21.69	22.81
Primary Education	..	24.47	24.92	25.02	41.93	62.77	65.77
Special Education	..	3.98	4.82	3.80	3.63	8.11	8.31
Basic Education	..	..	..	..	..	6.22	4.25
General Charges. (including scholarships, National Cadet Corp.)		10.46	11.60	12.23	12.68	17.79	20.23
Social Education		0.01					
Total	..	67.82	73.96	77.55	99.07	145.73	155.73

## CHAPTER VIII

# DISPLACED PERSONS

## DISPLACED PERSONS

### 458 **Introductory :**

As pointed out in Chapter I, the proper place for a discussion of the problem of displaced persons is Chapter I, Section IV—Migration. Whatever their political, economic and social significance, from the point of view of a demographer, the displaced persons are mainly another migration stream which goes to swell the ever increasing tide of population in Assam. In view of their intrinsic importance, I have thought it fit to discuss the problems of displaced persons in a separate Chapter in order to focus attention on them, rather than in some obscure corner of Section IV of Chapter I.

### 459. **Political background :**

The recent influx of Hindu refugees from Pakistan constitutes the biggest migration stream into Assam during the last decade. Following the Noakhali riots in October, 1946, and the partition of India, there has been an almost steady and continuous exodus of the Hindus of Pakistan into Assam. According to a census taken in July 1949, there were 24,600 families of displaced persons in Assam or approximately 114,500 persons. In Pakistan the wholesale opting out of experienced non-Muslim officers and their replacement by junior inexperienced Muslim officers, greatly weakened the administrative machinery and created a general feeling

of insecurity and lack of confidence in the *bona fides* of the new State. This coupled with other facts, such as, the lessening of prospects for Hindus in Government, and administrative services, in business and trade which in these days of controls depend largely on permits, licences, and Government sympathy and encouragement, examples of petty types of fanaticism and intolerent attitude towards other religions and the oft repeated declarations of the top ranking leaders of Pakistan that Pakistan will become a purely Islamic State—an ideology enshrined in the Objective Resolution of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, caused an exodus of Hindus from Pakistan to India. The people who came away in 1949 mainly belonged to the middle classes—intellectuals who were following the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan or richer classes who could afford to come away.

Soon after the 1949 Refugee Census, occurred the incidents of Soneswar and Habiganj, the oppression of the Hajongs in the North Mymansingh and the atrocities committed on the Santhals in Rajshhai, in East Dinajpur, etc. Then came the gruesome incidents over large areas of East Pakistan in February—March, 1950, especially Dacca. These led to the inevitable result, viz., the desertion by hundreds and thousands of Hindus in East Pakistan of their hearths

and homes to seek shelter in the neighbouring districts of West Bengal and Assam whichever were nearer. Their number at one time must have exceeded 5 lakhs. The April Agreement between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan brought back a sense of security among these terror-stricken masses, as a result of which large numbers went back to Pakistan. Their number as revealed by the Census is 274,455 (150,148 males and 124,307 females).

#### 460. Distribution of Refugees :

By far the large majority of refugees settled down in the Assam Plains, 259,946 against 14,509 only in Assam Hills. The district which sheltered the largest number of these unfortunate people is Cachar (93,177) due to its proximity to Sylhet from which the overwhelming majority of refugees to this district have come. As may be expected the next largest quota of refugees is sheltered by Goalpara (44,967), followed by Kamrup 42,871, Nowgong 38,599, Darrang 18,853, Sibsagar 7,514 and Lakhimpur 13,965. In the Hills division, the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills shelters 5,990, followed by Garo Hills 5,072, and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills 1,943. This completes the picture of distribution of refugees in the districts of Assam. Subsidiary Table 8.5 in Part I-B of the Report gives a complete picture of the distribution of displaced population in the various tracts. Table 1.23 in paragraph 61, Chapter I, gives a handy Summary of the refugee figures for each district.

#### 461. Distribution of refugees in Cachar :

The total number of refugees censused in the district of Cachar as at present constituted stands at 93,177. In view of the fact that as many as 55 thousand refugees were enumerated in Cachar in July, 1949, which was followed by a tremendous influx of refugees, especially in the early months of 1950, the Cachar total does appear to be on the low side. This will have to be critically examined. Fortunately as regards the Census in July, 1949, I can speak authoritatively as it was I who conducted that census too while I was in charge of this district. At that time I did notice a tendency among some people to get themselves enumerated as refugees, although they did not strictly satisfy the definition of refugees. Many persons who had settled down in Cachar either in service, business or trade tried to get themselves enumerated as

refugees, the usual plea was either that though they had settled in Cachar for long, they ceased to have any control over their property in Pakistan after the partition or that it is only after the partition that they made up their minds to settle for good in India. It is not unlikely that some of the people who were not actually refugees in the true sense of the term got themselves enlisted as refugees at that time.

For the present Census, I specifically referred to the District Officers in Cachar whether there was any tendency among East Bengal refugees to declare themselves as Indian citizens and whether the number of displaced persons was correct in their opinion. Regarding the first query, Silchar returned a negative reply whereas Karimganj and Hailakandi reported yes. Similarly, regarding the second query, Silchar returned a negative reply whereas Karimganj and Hailakandi did report in the affirmative. These attempts were checked as far as possible but ultimately we had to accept the statements of the people as final and enumerate them accordingly.

The analysis of the growth of population of Cachar also indicates that at least some of the refugees have got themselves enumerated as indigenous persons. The population of Cachar increased at the rate of 6.9 per cent, 11.4 per cent and 24.7 per cent in the decades 1921-31, 1931-41 and 1941-51, respectively. Out of the tremendous increase of 24.7 per cent, 10.4 per cent was due to the influx of refugees. This increase of 14.3 per cent (excluding the refugees) is rather high considering the normal rate of increase expected in Cachar. There is very little or no migration in this district. It along with Sylhet in the Surma Valley (of which it is a part) showed consistently a declining rate of increase in comparison with any other plains districts of Assam during the last 5 decades. The relative increases of Muslim and non-Muslim population of Cachar excluding refugees is given below :—

Decade	Total Growth	Muslim	Non-Muslim
1941-51	14.3	13.7	14.6
1931-41	11.4	17.4	7.4
1921-31	6.9	14.4	2.5

From the above figures, it is quite likely that some of the refugees did not declare themselves as such during the census enumeration because they preferred to be recorded as indigenous persons of Assam probably in view of the Government policy of according priority to indigenous persons in the matters of recruitment for Government employment, allotment of Government land and distribution of contracts, permits and licences. If so, the refugees themselves are responsible for this, as strict instructions were issued to the enumerating staff to record the answers exactly as they were given. Incidentally, these figures should conclusively dispose of the belief, held even among some authoritative quarters, of a large mass of Muslim infiltration into Cachar after independence, unless those who held it further believe that all such persons may have returned to Pakistan before the census took place, in view of the changed conditions of 1950.

Again most of the refugees come from the bordering district of Sylhet. Although it is a known fact that it has become increasingly difficult for the Hindus to remain in Pakistan, some of them used to come and return to Sylhet, still being unable to decide whether they should leave their hearths and homes for good. During this movement some of them might have been absent during the actual period of enumeration, i.e., between 9th February and 1st March, 1951. It is also not unlikely that some people being needy cross over from Sylhet to India, in order to avail themselves of the benefit of rehabilitation conferred by the Government and thus temporarily swell the number of refugees.

To sum up, the stream of refugees in Cachar is often changing, and its under-enumeration is partly due to this movement and partly due to the refugees who got themselves recorded as indigenous persons. I expected about 10 per cent increase in Cachar and undoubtedly refugees recording themselves as indigenous persons have contributed to the remaining unexpected increase of 3 to 4 per cent, but I cannot definitely allocate the proportion of increase on this account owing to the counter migration of Muslims from Cachar in consequence of communal disturbances in early 1950. According to the information supplied by the Government of Assam, all the Muslims returned to Cachar before the Census Date. If this be true, the greatly accelerated

rate of growth among the non-Muslims of Cachar can only be accounted for by the tendency on the part of refugees to get themselves recorded as indigenous persons.

This conclusion is supported by figures available from the Office of the Controller of Relief and Rehabilitation, Cachar. After his office was established, a system of issuing what are known as 'refugee slips' to refugee families who migrated from the beginning of 1950 was introduced. These slips were issued after due enquiry by the Inspectors working under the Controller. In 1950 alone altogether 19 thousand refugee slips were issued to the refugee families. Taking an average of 5 persons in a family, this will cover 95 thousand persons. The number of applications for loans from the refugee families also substantiates this impression. The total number of refugee families from whom applications for loans were received in Cachar was 30,178. The total number of applications enquired into and found eligible is 22,764. The officers of the Rehabilitation Department of Cachar generally make thorough and elaborate enquiries into these applications and no application is considered unless it is from a *bonafide* refugee on which point the enquiring officers are instructed to make a very careful investigation. Taking 5 persons to a family, the number of persons of 22,764 refugee families who, after proper enquiry, have been found eligible to receive rehabilitation loans, the total number of persons will come to 113,820. If we add to this figure 600 refugee families covering 3,000 persons, heads of which had found employment and to whom no rehabilitation loans were advanced, the total number would come up to 117,000. It should be noted that conditions of eligibility for rehabilitation loans being many, it is quite possible that of the 30,178 families from whom loan applications were received, a fair number were not found eligible on grounds other than that they were not *bonafide* refugees. Taking all the facts into consideration, one cannot help feeling that the census definitely under-estimates the number of refugees in Cachar, which at the time of the census was likely to be not less than 125,000.

#### 462. Distribution of Displaced Persons in Manipur and Tripura :

Manipur has only 1,009 refugees out of whom 578 are in rural areas and the rest in Imphal.

Tripura has been practically overwhelmed by the influx of refugees from across its borders, sheltering as many as 101,201 constituting 15.8 per cent of its entire population. This factor alone has contributed nearly 20 per cent to the overall percentage rate of increase (24.5) of Tripura in 1941-51. Nearly 1/5th\* of the total number (19,286) is found in the capital town of Agartala.

#### 463. How and When Came :

Table D-V (i) gives displaced persons by the year of their arrival. The first influx in any considerable number was in October 1946, immediately following the Noakhali riots. By the end of 1946 as many as 6,860 persons had come over to India largely from Noakhali, Tripura and Dacca. There is a certain amount of exaggeration in the figures of 1946, e.g., there is no reason why as many as 1,222 persons from Sylhet are reported to have come over to Assam as refugees in 1946 while Sylhet was still very much a part of Assam and the Referendum in and the Partition of Sylhet were beyond the imagination of any person. The stream of refugees declined after March 1947 reaching the all time low figure of 844 in May 1947. Soon came the Sylhet referendum and the partition of Assam which gave it a fillip. In the month of August 1947 alone as many as 12,297 persons came away followed by 6,348 in September and 4,409 in October 1947. There was a further falling off thereafter but it never fell below the 2,000 mark in any month except November 1948 and October, November 1949. The displaced persons continued to come and scatter themselves almost imperceptibly among the local residents especially of those areas which had already some Bengali population. The Assam Railway was manned mostly by Hindu optees from East Bengal and an estimate made late in 1948 stated that about 50,000 old refugees were then staying in the main railway colonies of Assam. An official census was taken of displaced persons in Assam in July 1949, which revealed that there were 24,600 families of displaced persons in Assam consisting of about 114,500 persons. A majority among them, viz., about 60,000 were censused in Cachar alone, under my personal supervision and direction as Deputy Commissioner. In 1947 and 1948 the refugees came in at the rate of 42,000 declining to 33,000 in

1949. Just when the refugee influx was finding its lowest level came the communal disturbances in East Pakistan in early 1950. As a result the number of refugees immediately mounted to nearly 9,500 in January 1950, and over 14,000 in February reaching the all time high record of 48,857 in March and 32,359 in April. These are the two crucial months in which over 80,000 refugees out of a total of 274,455 came into Assam. Due to the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 8th April 1950, confidence was restored among the minorities of East Pakistan, as a result of which the number of refugees coming into Assam went on decreasing till February, 1951 showed 1,541 only. Sylhet accounts for the largest number of East Pakistan refugees in Assam, followed by Mymensingh and Dacca. From Table D-V(1) for Assam we find that 144,512 or slightly more than half the total number of refugees in Assam came in the year 1950. The arrival of the refugees into Assam year by year was as follows :—

From East Pakistan	1946	6,860
	1947	42,346
	1948	41,740
	1949	33,138
	1950	144,512
(January & February)	1951	3,479
	Total	272,075
From West Pakistan		647
District of origin not known		1,733
	Grand Total	274,455

#### 463A. Tripura :

The main influx of refugees in Tripura occurred as in Assam in early 1950. The stream, however, started from 1946 during which Tripura received 3,317 persons. The influx of refugees in subsequent years in Tripura was as follows :—

1947	8,124
1948	9,554
1949	10,575
1950	67,151
1951 (January and February)	2,096
	97,500

From Table D-V(i) for Tripura it is clear that the stream was comparatively small during 1947

1948 and 1949. The pre-1950 refugees total 31,570, i.e., much less than 30 per cent of the entire refugee population. The main refugee influx, however, occurred as in the case of Assam in the 3 months, from February to April 1950, during which Tripura received the huge influx of 40,672. In the first five months of 1950, the entire population of Tripura increased by nearly 10 per cent. After the Prime Minister's Agreement, the stream declined and reached its lowest level in February 1951, when Tripura registered only 804 refugees.

#### 464. System of Registration\* :

There was no system of registration of displaced persons till the arrival of "new" refugees in 1950. In the earlier days of the new influx there were border camps in all districts through which all incoming refugees were expected to pass and where there were arrangements for their registration as well as for the issue of refugee certificates. With the gradual closing down of these camps there was no effective organisation to register displaced persons and the State Government, therefore, decided in September, 1950, that all unregistered "new" displaced persons should be registered as early as possible. The last date of registration as originally fixed was 15th October, 1950. This was extended from time to time to 31st July, 1951. The original instructions which covered registration of "new" refugees only were later modified to include "old" refugees also. The figures of displaced persons up to 30th June, 1951, are given below :—

Number of applications received	...	from 41,007 families
Number of applications disposed of	...	" 19,548 families
(i) Registration Cards issued to	...	17,938 families
(ii) Number rejected	...	1,610 families
Number of applications pending disposal on 1st July 1951.	...	from 21,464 families

\* This and the subsequent three paras are based on information kindly made available by the Rehabilitation authorities of Assam, Cachar and Tripura.

#### Cachar :

These figures do not include Cachar where responsibility for relief and rehabilitation has been taken over by the Central Government since 1st May, 1950. Registration of refugees continued up to the end of July, 1950, in Cachar and certificates were issued to 19,048 families, i.e., 95,240 persons taking 5 persons in a family on an average. As there was a complaint that many of the refugees had been left unregistered the date of registration was extended by the State Government up to July, 1951. The applications for the issue of certificates numbered to about 20,000. On scrutiny, some applications were found not to be genuine.

#### Tripura :

There is a regular system of registering the displaced persons at the bordering stations of this State. All displaced persons arriving here are required to be registered at the border stations. An office with adequate staff has been set up for the purpose of registration and issuing of arrival coupons to the displaced persons at the Akhaura border. The total number of displaced persons registered up to January, 1952, is 23,154, although the total displaced persons enumerated in the last Census are 101,200. This is mainly due to the fact that most of them left subsequently, for Pakistan and rest of India. There was no last date fixed for registration and as such registration is still going on.

#### 465. Organisation of initial relief :

To give succour to the new refugees who began pouring into the State in large numbers daily, relief camps were set up in all border districts and in some interior districts like Nowgong and Kamrup. At first most of these camps came into being through the effort of non-official bodies but in a few weeks' time they were taken over by the State Government. It is calculated that up to the middle of June, 1950, about 3 lakhs of "new" refugees passed through the various official and non-official relief camps in the border districts.

In these camps arrangements were made for the accommodation and feeding of displaced persons. Medical facilities were also provided at the expense of the State. A doctor or a compounder was attached to each camp for this



purpose. Necessary arrangements for sanitation were made by the local staff of the Department of Public Health. A primary school was opened in each camp for the education of refugee children.

At the height of the influx, there were in Assam excluding Cachar as many as 28 relief camps sheltering about 18,000 displaced persons. By the 1st of January, the number had come down to 7 camps accommodating about 3,500 souls. The last camp was closed by the end of September, 1951. The details are as given below (excluding Cachar):—

Date	No. of Camps	No. of inmates on dole
31st March, 1950.	28	18,566
30th June, 1950.	16	5,011
30th September, 1950.	15	4,488
31st December, 1950.	7	3,528
31st March, 1951.	6	1,152
30th June, 1951.	2	352
30th September, 1951.	—	—

No camps were set up by the State Government for the 'old' refugees who migrated before 1950.

#### Cachar :

In Cachar the relief camps were originally started by the Deputy Commissioner and handed over to the Controller of Relief and Rehabilitation on 1st May, 1950. Since then only 8 camps were maintained after collecting all the refugees scattered in public buildings (mainly in educational institutes) and other places. All the relief camps were abolished from 1st April, 1951, and the inmates moved to the rehabilitation colonies started by Government or to land secured by private efforts. Besides one camp for destitute unattached women and children was started in May, 1950, and after abolition of the camps when more destitutes came out a second camp was started in April, 1951. The camps still continue. A proposal for the construction of a permanent home is under consideration. The numbers of people in receipt of doles in these camps on 30th June, 1950, and 31st December, 1950, were 7,410 and 7,053 respectively. The number rose to a maximum in September, 1950, when it was 10,369. On 30th P/42—46.

June, 1951, the destitutes only received doles in 2 camps and their number was 963. The Medical Officers appointed by Government were in charge of different camps, who also looked after the sanitary arrangements. Inoculation and vaccination were carried out in season times. Primary education was given in camps and the children above the primary classes were given facilities to continue their education in nearby schools.

#### Tripura :

The influx of Hindus from Pakistan to Tripura began mainly from the middle of February, 1950, and their number began to increase so rapidly that it necessitated arrangements for providing immediate shelter, and with this end in view one reception centre was opened at Akhaura border as a temporary measure and from this the refugees were shifted for temporary shelter to the local College and Schools. In order to mitigate the suffering of the refugees at the border, a large number of volunteers were deputed to render all possible help to the refugees in various matters such as regulation, etc. Professors and Teachers of the local College and schools rendered humanitarian services. But very soon the influx of refugees increased to such an extent that the local College and the schools where they were accommodated were heavily congested. In order to cope with the situation a few huts had to be quickly erected. Altogether 23,000 huts were constructed in 47 camps of Tripura and these gave shelter to about 39,000 refugees. The Relief and Rehabilitation Department has arranged for medical aids to the displaced persons through the State Dispensaries and Hospitals and a staff consisting of 37 medical officers, 38 compounders, 15 vaccinators and requisite number of menials are also maintained by the Department. There are 29 medical centres of the Relief and Rehabilitation Department functioning at different places at present. There is also a Children's Hospital under the Department, which has been taken over from the International Red Cross Society.

At present 20 Primary Schools are functioning in different camps and rehabilitation centres. Stipends are also being awarded to the students and cash grants for books, etc., are being made in some cases according to the principles laid down by the Government of India.

The number of camps, their population and the number of recipients of doles as on different dates are detailed below :—

Date	No. of camps	Population	No. of doles
31st December, 1947	—	—	—
30th June, 1948	—	—	—
31st December, 1948	—	—	—
30th June, 1949	—	—	—
31st December, 1949	—	—	—
30th June, 1950	47	31,537	31,537
31st December, 1950	47	29,922	26,914
30th June, 1951	39	25,547	24,052

The maximum population in 47 camps was 39,000 in the month of March, 1951.

#### 466. Role of unofficial bodies in the organisation of relief work :

Many non-official bodies like the Ramkrishna Mission, Marwari Relief Society, Shillong Refugee Aid Society and other 'ad hoc' bodies set up in different localities rendered valuable help in organising relief especially in the early days of the exodus in February—March, 1950. Full accounts of their activities are not yet available with Government.

Non-official organisation rendered full co-operation in Cachar. From May, 1950, all relief operations were carried out by Government employees. Silchar Ramkrishna Mission helped to a great extent in starting a colony. Free supply of milk was received and rice for feeding children, obtained from U. N. I. C. E. F. was distributed to children.

#### Tripura :

The role of non-official bodies in the organisation of relief work such as Central Relief Committee, Ramkrishna Mission and Marwari Relief Society was very commendable. They rendered humanitarian services to mitigate the suffering of the refugees by distributing free clothings, rendering medical aids, etc.

#### 467. Special features of the programme of rehabilitation :

##### Assam :

**Agriculturists :** Five schemes for permanent rehabilitation of about 5,500 families of agriculturists have been sanctioned by the Government of India at a total cost of Rs. 55 lakhs approximately. Four of these schemes have already been implemented partly; the details up to the 31st December, 1951, are as follows :—

	No. of families settled	Amount issued as loan Rs.
(1) Baghbar Scheme	1,889	1,272,000
(2) Kauli Scheme	200	99,900
(3) Goalpara Scheme	3,043	1,001,000
(4) Nowgong Scheme	113	52,700
Total	5,245	2,425,600

In the case of most families who are being rehabilitated under these schemes, only the first or first two instalments of the loans have been issued so far.

**Non-Agriculturists :** A scheme for the construction of a new market for displaced persons at Gauhati has been sanctioned by the Government of India at a cost of about Rs. 9 lakhs. This project is under implementation by the State Public Works Department who hope to complete it in a few months' time. Other similar schemes so far sanctioned include construction of a new market at Haibargaon (Nowgong) at a cost of about Rs. 2½ lakhs and construction of 36 stalls at Nalbari for the rehabilitation of refugee businessmen.

In addition to the above, a scheme for the construction of a small township near Gauhati for rehabilitating about 500 families of displaced persons has been sanctioned. The land required for the purpose has been requisitioned and construction work is expected to start soon. Three other townships, one at Shillong for 350 families, one near Pandu for 500 families and one at Rupshi in the Goalpara district for about 1,000 families are at present under contemplation. Detailed topographic and economic surveys of the area are being conducted at present.

Among the urban housing loan schemes so far sanctioned by the Government of India are one for 100 houses in Lumding and another for 250 houses in certain other urban areas of the State (excluding Cachar).

Apart from the above, a few important development schemes have been sanctioned by the Government for developing the areas selected as rehabilitation centres. These include improvement of communications, provision of drinking water, minor irrigation projects, construction of primary schools and provision of medical aid. The following four projects will be undertaken under this scheme by the State Public Works Department :—

	Length. Miles	Approx. cost. Rs.
(1) Barpeta-Bagbar Road	13	8.75 lakhs.
(2) Kumarkati-Kauli-Dengargaon Road	8	1.02 lakhs.
(3) Abhyapuri-Lengtisingha Road	4	1.00 lakhs.
(4) Dengargaon-Kauli "dong"	2	5,000

Over a hundred ring-wells and a few primary schools will also be constructed in rehabilitation centres under this scheme.

**Training and education facilities :** Among the schemes for the technical and vocational training of displaced persons may be mentioned the Jorhat Scheme under which 133 refugee trainees are being taught useful crafts in the Industrial Training Institute run by the Director General Resettlement and Employment, the Nowgong Scheme under which 20 refugee girls per year are given "dhai" training at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre at Nowgong and the Paper Training Centre, Shillong, for instructing refugee trainees in paper-making, printing and book-binding.

A scheme for the establishment of a Training cum-Work Centre at Rupsi has been sanctioned. The necessary machinery and equipment have already been received and the centre will start functioning as soon as the Industrial Rehabilitation Officer whose services are expected to be

made available by the Government of India, joins the State Government.

For looking after the destitute and unattached displaced women and children as well as old and infirm unattached displaced persons, three Homes have been established in the State, at Gauhati, Nowgong and Rupsi. There are in all about 250 inmates at present in these three Homes. The able-bodied among them are being taught useful arts and crafts like spinning and weaving, paddy husking and preparation of chira, muri, etc., pottery making, gardening and cow-keeping. There is a Lower Primary School attached to each Home for the education of the children. Arrangements also exist for the necessary medical aid being made available to the inmates. The day to day management of these Homes is entrusted to the Managing Committee appointed by the State Government of which the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned is the Chairman and in which the local Mahila Samitis and other social workers are suitably represented.

**Cachar :** The rehabilitation programme started from early part of 1950 when people started settling. About 15,000 people were sent to different tea gardens for settlement on surplus lands there. As and when land was available on requisition or otherwise, new colonies were started. At present there are 20 colonies with a population of 42,256. Four Training-cum-Work Centres were also started in the district for training in cottage industries. Uptil now about 500 trainees passed out of these Centres. Yarns at controlled rates are being made available monthly on a fixed quota basis to about 3,000 refugee weavers. Monthly stipends and free-studentship are also being allowed to about 3,000 students. Six ladies have been given Government help for training in dhai course. American Missions were allowed grants-in-aid for segregating and maintaining Leper patients from amongst the refugees. Rehabilitation facilities have been given to middle class people for profession, industry and business within limit of funds.

**Tripura :** As regards special features of the programme of rehabilitation in the State, Government has some schemes for establishing rural colonies and according to these schemes, rehabilitation work is going on in rural areas.

468. **Livelihood pattern of displaced persons :**

Fortunately as the present census tabulation was based on the economic classification of the entire population, we are in a position to know the livelihood pattern of these displaced persons, which will enable us to view how they support themselves in Assam. Table 8.1 given below gives the livelihood pattern for displaced persons in Assam and its natural divisions.

TABLE 8.1  
*Distribution of displaced persons per 10,000*

Livelihood Class		Assam State	Assam Plains Division	Assam Hills Division
Total	Persons ...	10,000	9,471	529
	Males ..	5,471	5,184	287
	Females ..	4,529	4,287	242
I.—Males	...	612	583	29
Females	...	548	523	25
II.—Males	..	743	709	34
Females	..	612	585	27
III.—Males	..	183	161	22
Females	...	137	116	21
IV.—Males	..	21	20	1
Females	...	20	19	1
V.—Males	..	857	840	17
Females	...	693	679	14
VI.—Males	...	1,088	1,026	62
Females	...	855	802	53
VII.—Males	..	529	509	20
Females	..	470	450	20
VIII.—Males	..	1,438	1,336	102
Females	...	1,194	1,113	81

As often pointed out at various places in the Report, the presence of as much as 26 per cent of the total population found under Livelihood Class VIII, shows that miscellaneous sources of livelihood, and not any specific occupation is what chiefly supports the displaced persons. As those maintained on Government doles are classed under Class VIII, there cannot be any doubt about its predominance. The preference among the displaced persons for urban areas or their outskirts which are the places most likely to provide such miscellaneous sources of living is both a cause and an effect of this feature. The same applies to Livelihood Class VI, *i.e.*, Commerce which accounts for another large slice of their numbers, *viz.*, 19.4 per cent. There is no doubt that many of the displaced persons earn a precarious living by taking to petty trades and commerce. Class V is next in importance containing 17.8 per cent of them. Many refugee families have been absorbed by the tea industry as well as many small occupations and cottage industries which feature under Class V. Their percentage in Class V is 15.5. It is 11.6 per cent in Class I, and 13.6 under Class II. Barely 3 per cent of displaced persons maintain themselves as agricultural labourers.

## APPENDIX 1

# SOME DIFFICULTIES REGARDING SAMPLE VERIFICATION OF 1951 CENSUS COUNT

(a) As stated in Para. 6, Chapter I, the selection of sample households and blocks devolved on the officers in charge of the Tabulation Offices at Shillong and at Jorhat and was made in strict conformity with the instructions issued by the Registrar General, India. There was no difficulty regarding the selection of sample blocks as we had taken right from the stage of preliminary census arrangements every village as a census block. Some difficulty was experienced in the selection of sample households because the instructions to the enumerators to give a running serial number for all the households entered in the National Register of Citizens were not followed carefully enough in a large number of cases *e.g.*, house-numbers were repeated in the column for household serial numbers and same numbers were given to households in spite of specific instructions to give a running serial number to them. As a result, the household serial number in the National Register of Citizens for the sample villages had to be thoroughly re-cast and re-written. In the case of towns, the selection of one block out of twenty resulted in complete omission of several small towns. In filling up the Sample Verification forms the Tabulation Offices sometimes experienced considerable difficulty in reading the names of the persons and tracing their relationship to the head of their households as the National Registers of Citizens were written by unqualified or ill-educated enumerators. Uninhabited blocks or villages were rejected and in selecting the sample villages, notice was taken only of the occupied villages in

the relevant Primary Census Abstracts. Secondly, the entire block was rejected if the total number of households was less than ten. There was no substitution for such blocks. The instructions aimed at selecting roughly twenty sample households or hundred persons in a tract with one lakh of population. If this standard was not achieved when the selection of houses and blocks was complete, there was no alternative before us but to ignore the difference. Frequently the number of sample households and the number of persons in the sample houses did not come up to the required standard. If accidentally some large villages happened to be selected as the sample villages of a tract or the sample households happened to be those with large families, the number of sample households and the persons therein went much beyond the standard of twenty households or hundred persons for a tract with one lakh of population. Conversely, they fell below the standard if small villages or small households happened to fall within the random sample. The Deputy Superintendents were instructed to ignore such variations and stick to the instructions whatever be the dimension of the resultant sample.

(b) The Census Count ended on the 3rd March, 1951. Though the Chief Secretary's Circular regarding the Sample Verification Scheme was issued to all Deputy Commissioners and Sub-divisional Officers as early as 14th June, 1951, the Tabulation Offices being extremely busy

with the completion of sorting for Sorter's Ticket O, the making up of boxes and the preparation of Primary Census Abstracts, could take up the work of preparing the Sample Verification forms only at a late stage. Sample Verification forms were sent out from Shillong Office after the first week of July in a regular stream, which continued till the end of August, while the Jorhat Office could finish it so late as the second week of September.

(c) The Chief Verification Officers were directed to return the Sample Verification forms after due completion within three weeks of their receipt. As many as four out of seven districts selected for sample verification failed to do so on account of circumstances beyond their control, viz., heavy and widespread floods which swept large portions of the districts of Goalpara (Goalpara Subdivision), Nowgong, Lakhimpur (North Lakhimpur Subdivision) and Kamrup (Barpeta Subdivision). When the Sub-divisional Officers of Barpeta, Goalpara and North Lakhimpur specially wrote informing me of their inability to carry out verification within the stipulated time limit due to this natural calamity, I had no alternative but to extend it. Later on, the verification was completed sometime after the Pujahs in October after the floods had subsided. The Sub-divisional Officer, North Lakhimpur in his Verification Report specifically mentions that the delay in returning the forms was mainly due to the fact that the interior places selected for verification were not accessible for quite some time due to these floods. One Sub-Deputy Magistrate and Verification Officer in Nowgong plaintively writes, "the village ought not to have been selected for sample verification specially at a time when the village is not approachable by any other means except on foot. With the greatest difficulty the sample verification was carried out." Another report about some other selected village has this to say about the difficulties involved. "It is not known why this village was selected for sample verification as it is not approachable by any other way except on foot. In some places there is knee-deep mud. With the greatest difficulty and trouble, I could visit the village." I am sorry for the trick played by the random sampling process in selecting such difficult villages for verification, but there was no way in which I could oblige these officers as the randomness of the sample had to be strictly maintained. These extracts will give you some idea of the difficulties encountered by our Verification

Officers in carrying out their work at this inconvenient time of the year, viz., the rainy season of Assam. There was considerable delay in completing the verification work of Silchar Subdivision. When the personal attention of the Deputy Commissioner was drawn to it, I learnt that the First Class Magistrate who was entrusted with the work could not carry it out in time on account of the serious illness and premature death of his young son. The Deputy Commissioner thereafter entrusted the work to another First Class Magistrate who completed it as early as he could.

(d) As a rule, the verification was carried out by First Class Magistrates for the headquarter towns and some mofussil areas. In one case the Sub-divisional Officer personally verified two sample villages. Where the First Class Magistrates were too much tied up with the clearance of the arrears of their magisterial work, it was entrusted to Sub-Deputy Magistrates within their respective tehsils. In two cases, the Deputy Commissioners had to requisition the services of officers outside the Magistracy, viz., the Election Officers, at Dhubri and Gauhati, for completing the verification.

(e) Effacement of house-numbers presented some difficulty at the time of verification. Apart from the normal movements of people searching work in tea-gardens, etc., the temporary structures in which many of the villagers in Assam live, cannot retain the house numbers for any length of time due to the inclemency of Assam's storms, floods and earthquakes. One Verification Officer reports great difficulty in doing his work because "no house bears any number as they have been washed away by floods."

#### QUALITY OF VERIFICATION WORK

The sample was in practice a very small one, 1/1327 of the household population. It was not possible to carry it out immediately after the enumeration was over but after a lapse of nearly four months. Fair copies of the National Registers of Citizens could not be supplied without detriment to the main tabulation work. This delay, however, does not seem to have affected the verification of any item on the Sample Verification form. The Verification Officers were mostly Sub-Deputy Magistrates, though in a fair number of cases there were First Class Magistrates also. Under what trying conditions some of them had to carry out

the work has been already stated above. Most of them carried out this additional census duty with the best grace. In this connection, however, I cannot but criticize on the work of a small minority of these officers. A Verifying Officer in Goalpara pointed out omissions of individuals even in three houses nearest to the sample household on account of his failure to understand his instructions and to realise that he had not to bother about individual members of any households except the sample ones.

(2) I wish the Verifying Officer of Lakhimpur District, who was a S. D. C. could have reported early his failure to trace out the village, "W. L. Application". In that case, Deputy Superintendent, Jorhat, could have requested the Deputy Commissioner to give him more particulars to enable him to trace out this village; and we would have probably succeeded in bringing the four selected sample households of this village under full verification.

(3) One Sub-Deputy Collector in Nowgong was guilty of taking an irresponsible attitude towards his work. All that he did was to return the Sample Verification forms after some-time stating that all the 10 households of a village could not be verified because house-numbers were not given in the Sample Verification form. In another sample village which the same officer had to verify, he returned the papers saying that the mauza number of the village was not given. It was clear that he shirked his task by merely pointing out some minor defects which need not have stood in his way. I took strong exception to the light-hearted behaviour of this officer and even though very late brought the case personally to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner who was kind enough to get the two villages of Sapatketa and Kannamari verified by his Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner. As a result, 28 selected households which were not verified first were brought within actual verification later.

(4) In the case of village Ghagrapara in Mangaldai Subdivision, the Verifying Officer considered all the nine members of the sample household as fictitious entries. Feeling that there

was something fishy about such wholesale condemnation, I drew the personal attention of the Sub-divisional Officer, Mangaldai to this report and was gratified to learn that there were two villages with similar names, one Ghagrapara and the other Ghagrapara N. C. The Tabulation Office had omitted 'N. C.' (i.e., non-cadastral) hence the Verifying Officer went to the cadastral village with the same name and finding no body there, judged all the entries fictitious. When the matter was re-verified at my suggestion, another officer was sent to Ghagrapara N. C., who found that all the entries relate to this, not to Ghagrapara, and that they were all correct.

(5) While consolidating the results, another striking case came to my notice. In this case, the Sub-divisional Officer, Mangaldai, had personally checked up one village. In one of the sample households belonging to the Gaonbura (Head of the village), himself he found clear omissions of 23 persons in House No. 33 of village Paka Bangipara in Mangaldai thana! As it was difficult to understand how an enumerator could omit so many persons living in the household of the head of the village himself, the Sub-divisional Officer could not but express some doubt regarding the omissions which he himself had certified. At my suggestion, the Sub-divisional Officer again got the household re-verified. The enumerator as well as the Gaonbura were both personally connected; they assured the district authorities that all the members of the Gaonbura's family were duly enumerated. The Gaonbura himself was present at the time of enumeration of his family members and as such there was no scope at all for omission of so many names from a single household. It appears that their names were written in a separate pad and hence copied on a different page of N. R. C. Thus my personal scrutiny has removed three gross cases of error or undue omission from the verification statement, for which I am grateful to the Sub-divisional Officer, Mangaldai and the Deputy Commissioner, Nowgong, for their kindness in getting the relevant entries re-verified. Apart from these few cases all the Verification Officers carried out their extra task with the best of grace and zeal.



## ANNEXURE 'A'

	ASSAM			TRIPURA		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
(1) Total number of sample households selected for verification.	1,147	1,096	51	107	104	3
(2) Number of households out of (1) verified.	1,131	1,084	47	106	103	3
(3) Total number of persons in (2) i.e., in verified households.	5,864	5,633	231	529	508	21
(4) Number of clear omissions.	.. 61	61	Nil.	1	1	..
(5) Number of fictitious entries.	.. 15	9	6	..	..	..
(6) Erroneous count of visitors and absentees:—						
(i) Number of cases tending to under-enumeration.	1	1	Nil.	..	..	..
(ii) Number of cases tending to over-enumeration.	1	1	Nil.	..	..	..
(7) Net number of cases of under-enumeration [ 4+6 (i) ]—[5+6 (ii) ]	46	52	—6	1	1	..
(8) Enumerated household population.	7,779,605	7,454,542	325,063	611,971	578,514	33,457
(9) Estimated number of persons not enumerated (8) × 7/3.	60,372	68,815	—8,443	1,157	1,157	..
(10) Estimated number of persons in occupied houses which were not covered.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
(11) Estimated household population (8+9+10).	7,839,977	7,523,357	316,620	613,128	579,671	33,457
(12) Estimated total population.	7,865,930	7,536,754	329,176	640,186	597,591	42,595

## APPENDIX 2

# NATURAL REGIONS, SUB-REGIONS & DIVISIONS

### EASTERN HIMALAYAN SUB-REGION

#### ASSAM PLAINS NATURAL DIVISION

##### (1) Physical features

##### (A) The Brahmaputra Valley

The Brahmaputra Valley is an alluvial plain, about 450 miles in length, with an average width of 50 miles, lying almost east and west in its lower portion, but in its upper half tending somewhat to the north-east. To the north is the main chain of the Himalayas, the lower ranges of which rise abruptly from the plains; to the south is the great elevated plateau or succession of plateaux known as the Assam Range. At several points on the southern side of the valley, the hills of the Assam Range abut on the river and at Goalpara, Gauhati and Tezpur, there are spurs belonging to this group on the north as well as on the south bank. The broadest part of the valley is where the river divides the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, below which the isolated block of the Mikir Hills to the south and the projecting group of the Dafila Hills to the north suddenly contract it. Forty miles lower down, it widens out, but at the lower end of the Nowgong district it is again encroached upon by the Khasi Hills, among the spurs of which the river makes its way in front of Gauhati and it is almost completely shut in just to the west of the town, below the temple-crowned hill of Nilachal or Kamakhya, where

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the stream is not 1,000 yards broad. Thereafter the hills recede again, and the mountains do not approach the Brahmaputra until Goalpara, situated on a spur of the Garo Hills, is reached. Beyond this point, the valley again widens, and at Dhubri, opens out into the great delta of Bengal.

##### The Brahmaputra

2. Down the centre of the valley flows the mighty Brahmaputra, but owing to the rapidity of its current, it does not, in this the upper part of its course, exercise the fertilising influence of the Nile, the Ganges and other great rivers. This does not, however, mean that some of the chaparis in Upper Assam, though sandy, are not fertile. It is true that its water contains, especially in the rainy season, a large quantity of matter in suspension, but it is the sand which is deposited while the silt is carried on till the slackening of the current allows it to settle down and fertilise the plains of Bengal. In Assam, the river flows between sandy banks, covered with dense jungle grass, the home of wild buffaloes, rhinoceros and other large game and from the decks of the river steamers one can catch but few signs of population or cultivation. A few miles inland, however, the appearance of the country changes and rice fields or tea gardens take the place of the riverine swamps. Except at Silghat, Tezpur, Gauhati, Goalpara and Jogighopa, where rocks and hills give permanence to the channel this majestic

river, in the rest of its course, spreads itself during the rains over the marshy country on either side and when in flood the distance between one bank to the other is very great indeed. Between its main banks there is a wide sandy stretch in which it constantly oscillates from side to side for a breadth of about 6 miles on either side. Of the stream, throwing out here and there divergent channels, which, after a time, rejoin the parent stream, or get silted up. The waters of the river are heavily surcharged with suspended matter and the smallest obstruction in the current is liable to give rise to almond shaped chapari, but the next floods may wash this chapari away or may increase its size by fresh deposits of sand, covered in a few seasons with reeds and jungle grass. These operations of alluvium and diluvium are continually being carried on a gigantic scale by the mighty river.

The Brahmaputra, the main artery of Assam enters the State in the districts of Abor Hills Rising near the Manas Sarowar, away north of Kashmir, it flows eastward as the Tsangpo through Tibet, being crossed by the Indo-Lhassa road at Chaksen Ferry, not far from Lhassa, and then turns southward cutting the main Himalaya axis at a point of which the approximate latitude is  $29.35^{\circ}\text{N}$ . and longitude  $95.20^{\circ}\text{E}$ . In its bend, it encircles some magnificent peaks dominated by Namcha Barua (24,445). The Tsangpo leaves the hills and enters the plains at Pasighat. A few miles below Pasighat, it divides into two channels, the Dihang channel and the Lali, the island between known as the Lali chapari. Twenty miles south of Pasighat and west of Sadiya, it is joined by the Lohit-Brahmaputra. The Lohit rises in Eastern Tibet, where it is known as the Zayul, and flows southwards, entering the Mishmi Hills district 25 miles south of Rima. Thirty miles further south, it turns due west at Minzang. After its journey through the Mishmi country the Lohit-Brahmaputra enters the plains at Parasuram Kund, 46 miles from Sadiya, a place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. Feeder steamers can pass up the Brahmaputra at all seasons as far as Morkongselek, which lies 40 miles up stream from Dibrugarh, while from May to November, they can penetrate a further 50 miles. Swelled by the melting snows of the Himalayas, the river is subject to big floods and at such times the junction between Sadiya and Kobe of the main stream and its two chief confluent, the Lohit and the

Dibang, is a site of savage, relentless strength and beauty. Throughout its course, the Brahmaputra receives a vast number of affluents, great and small, from the hills to the north and south. The greater of the northern streams are snow-fed, while those from the south (except the Dihing) depend upon the annual rains for their volumes and shrink to small dimensions in winter. On the north, the chief tributaries of the Brahmaputra are the Dibong, Dihang, Subansiri, Boreli, Barnadi and Manas. On the south, the great affluents are the New and Old Dihings, the Disang, the Disoi, the Dhansiri, the Kallong, the Kapili, the Kulsi and the Jinjiram.

#### (B) Cachar

Lastly, there is Cachar containing a large number of tea gardens, the population of which has greatly increased in the last 50 years owing to immigration from Sylhet and tea garden labourers. Cachar's mean elevation above the sea-level is much lower than that of the Brahmaputra Valley. Hence, the course of the numerous rivers or rivulets which traverse it is exceedingly sluggish, while the stream of the Brahmaputra is swift. While the latter river hurries rapidly along through a waste of sandy chaparis, making and unmaking its banks year by year, the rivers of Cachar, or the whole of Surma Valley of which it is a part, find their way to the great estuary of the Meghna by extremely tortuous channels, the banks of which, reinforced by the annual deposits of silt, are the highest ground in the level area, and as such are the most populous and best cultivated portions. The angular and serrated range of the Barail or "great dyke", forms the northern boundary of Cachar.

7. Throughout Cachar, the surface is broken by the southern section of the Assam Range included in the District and by the frequent groups of isolated hills of small height, called 'tilas'. The latter may be regarded as continuations below the alluvium of the southern ranges of Tippera and the Lushai Hills. The former includes the Bhutan Range on the east, the Sarapur Hills on the west of the Hailakandi Valley, the Duhalia or Pratapgarh Hills on the west of the Chargola Valley, and finally the Patharia Hills. The Patharias are a tract of hilly country from 6 to 7 miles in breadth, running almost due north, forming the eastern boundary of the district, as also of the Republic of India. The

Patharia Hills<sup>1</sup> which became a bone of contention between India and Pakistan after the partition was one of the points referred to the Bagge Tribunal in 1949. Except where the tilas and the southern ranges project, Cachar, along with its larger counterpart Sylhet (now in East Pakistan), is a part of the vast deltaic expanse, covered with a perplexing net-work of sluggish streams and liable to deep flooding in the rains. The highest ground is on the river banks, from which the surface slopes backward into great hollows, or saucer-like depressions, called 'haors', all of which are lakes, some of great extent in the rains, and in the greater part of which water lies in some part throughout the cold season.

### **The Surma or Barak**

The Surma or the Barak rises in the Barail range to the north of Manipur on the southern slopes of the Naga-Manipur water-shed. Flowing through Manipur, Cachar and Sylhet, it finally empties itself into the old bed of the Brahmaputra near Bairab Bazar, after a course of 560 miles. Entering Cachar at Tipaimukh, the tri-junction point of Manipur, Cachar and the Lushai Hills, it turns sharply to the north and after emerging from the Bhuban range near Lakhimpur, takes a very tortuous course, with a generally westward direction, through the district. At Haritikar, the river divides into two branches and the southern arm, which is known as the Kusiara, crosses into Sylhet. The northern branch, as the Surma, forms the boundary between Cachar and Sylhet as far as Jalalpur. The chief affluents of the Barak on the north are the Jiri and Jatinga from the North Cachar Hills and the Sonai, Dhaleswari and Katakhal from the Lushai Hills and the Longai and Singla from the Tippera Hills. The Barak is navigable by steamer as far as Silchar in the rains.

The general appearance of Cachar is extremely picturesque. On the north, east and south, it is shut in by range upon range of purple hills, whose forest-clad sites are seamed with white land-slips and gleaming water-falls. There are none of these wide stretches of unbroken plain, which forms so tedious a feature in the landscape in many parts of India. Low hills crop up here and there above the alluvium, rising like rocky islets out of a summer sea, and in one direction or another, mountains always lend enchantment to the view. To the south, much of the

country is still covered<sup>1</sup> with primeval forest. Further north, the highest land has been cleared and planted with tea, while the lower levels are covered with rich crops of waving rice. <sup>2</sup>Here and there swamps and bils, with clumps of elephant grass and reed, lend variety to the view. The banks of the Barak, which winds its way through the centre of the plain is, for the most part, lying with villages looking fresh and green at all seasons of the year. Among the bils and swamps, the Bakri Haor, Chatla Haor and the Kaliganj Haor in Karimganj are specially noteworthy. The climate of Cachar, however, is not so pleasant as that of Upper Assam. The rainfall is extremely heavy, but the temperature is considerably higher than in Dibrugarh and the winter is not nearly so cold and bracing as in the northern valley.

### **(2) Geology and Minerals**

See under Assam Hills Natural Division.

### **(3) Climate and Rainfall**

The most characteristic feature of the climate is the great dampness of the atmosphere at all seasons, in conjunction with the moderately high and comparatively equable temperature, due to the sub-tropical position of the division and to its being protected from all desiccating winds by the hills which enclose and seclude it.

The year is broadly divided into two seasons, the cold season and the rains, the hot season of the rest of India being practically absent. In the cool season, thick fogs blanket the rivers, almost every morning and do not lift till the sun has attained its noon-day power. During this season rainfall occurs from time to time during the passage of cold weather storms across north-east India. The mean maximum temperature in January varies from 70°F at Sibsagar to 73°F at Dhubri, 75°F at Gauhati and 78°F at Silchar. The mean minimum temperature during this month is less than 50°F at Sibsagar, 53°F at Dhubri, 51°F at Gauhati and 52°F at Silchar.

In the spring season, thundershowers are frequent and these merge imperceptibly into the monsoon rainfall which starts in June and lasts until October. During the monsoon season, rainfall over most of the area is abundant and sometimes heavy. The hottest period of the year is generally the months of July and August and combined with the atmosphere overcharged with moisture, makes the weather sultry and oppressive. The maximum temperature in July and

August at most of the stations is about 85°F and the minimum about 75°F. The area has suffered more from floods than from the failure of the rains. The rivers are frequently unable to carry off the torrents of water suddenly precipitated over their catchment areas and the sudden rise of the rivers sometimes submerges large areas of the plains under water. After October, rainfall rapidly diminishes and December is the driest month of the year for the area.

#### (4) Soil

##### (i) Assam Hills, Manipur and Tripura

No information whatsoever is available regarding the soil of the districts of the Assam Hills Natural Division.

A reference to the Gazetteer of United K. & J. Hills district gives the following information about the geology of the Hills District :—

“The geology of a hills district is too technical a subject to admit of adequate discussion in a gazetteer and those interested in the matter would do well to refer direct to the authorities: Memoirs and Records of the Geological Survey of India.”

##### (ii) Assam Plains

Almost the entire Assam Plains Natural Division is of alluvial origin. Its soil consists of sand and clay in varying proportions ranging from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to a clay so stiff as to be quite unfit for cultivation. In the Goalpara Duara the soil is for the most part light and gravelly. The colour of the soil verges towards blue in Kamrup district. The Bisnath plain in Darrang and an elevated tract of land north of Tezpur, the headquarters of this district, known as the high bank, are apparently the remains of an older alluvium which elsewhere has disappeared. The soil of Darrang is distinguished from that of the rest of the plain by its closer texture and reddish colour. The higher land in Sibsagar also is apparently the remains of an earlier deposit of alluvium. Mr. Maclaren in a paper on the geology of Upper Assam published in Volume XXI, Pt. 4, of the Records of the Geological Survey of India suggested that the level of the valley was still sinking. Were it stationary, the broad belt of low land lying on either would soon be raised to flood level by the deposits of the enormous volume of solid matter brought down

by these rivers and would be carried far beyond it by the luxuriant vegetable growth of the country.

### ASSAM HILLS NATURAL DIVISION

#### (1) Physical Aspects

Assam minus the Brahmaputra Valley and Cachar consists of ranges of hills, the average elevation of which is 4,000'. The hilly tracts included within the State consist of the Assam Range, which is interposed between the Brahmaputra and the Surma Valleys, with the Mikir Hills, the Lushai Hills and the ridges generally of low elevation, which run northward from Hill Tippera and the Lushai Hills into the Surma Valley. The Assam Range is much broken at its eastern and western extremities and along its northern face, but in its central portion, from the eastern border of the Garo Hills to the water-shed of the Dhansiri, a region of table land and rolling uplands. The various portions of this range are called by the names of the tribes who inhabit them—the Garo, the Khasi, the Jaintia, the North Cachar, the Mikir and the Naga Hills. The Assam Range is a great elevated plateau or a succession of plateaux; with the sharply serrated range of the Barail and its spurs, it is joined at its eastern extremity by the Patkoi to the Himalayan system, and by the mountains of Manipur to the Arrakan Yoma. At its western end in the Garo Hills, it attains an elevation of more than 4,600 feet in the peak of Nokrek, above Tura, but falls again before the Khasi boundary is reached. The highest points of the Khasi-Jaintia table land are the Shillong Peak, 6,450 feet, the Dingyei, 6,077, Rableng, 6,283, and Swer, 6,390; but these are only the most elevated portions of a plateau, hardly any portion of which falls much below 5,000 feet, and which is all inhabited and cultivated. Here we find rounded hills covered with short grass or patches of pine forest, suggesting the Sussex downs on the Devon moors. To the east the level again falls, the highest summits not much exceeding 5,000 feet in the Jaintia Hills, and considerably less in the Cachar Hills north of the Barail or the “great dyke”.

The latter commencing on the south-east margin of the Khasi-Jaintia plateau, rises by sudden leaps to a considerable height, with the summits of from 5,000 to 6,000 feet in the

Jatinga Valley.\* The range then curves north-eastwards, and attains a still greater height, where it forms the boundary between the Naga Hills district and the State of Manipur. Here the very high elevation of nearly 10,000 feet above sea level is reached by the peak of Japvo, which over hangs Kohima. To the north-east of this point the mountain system of the Barail is broken up, by the influence of the meridional axis of elevation prolonged from the Arrakan Yoma, into a mass of ranges having a general north east and south-west direction until the Patkoi is reached. The highest points in this portion are from 8,000 to 9,000 feet. Snow is frequent on the Japvo and in its neighbourhood, but seldom falls further west. It is also seen to cover the hills lying about the upper course of the Dihing as far as the Patkoi.

Between the main axis of the Assam Range and the valley of the Brahmaputra the average height of the hills varies considerably. The country is deeply cut into by river channels, and is covered with dense forest. The isolated block of hills, 4,090 square miles in area, known as the Mikir-Rengma Hills, is cut off from the main range by the low-lying and unhealthy valleys of the Dhansiri, the Kapili, the Lungphar and the Jamuna river and has within it summits attaining a height of 4,000 feet. The population is very sparse, and the country densely wooded. The hills lying south of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, and people for the most part by the tribes of Nagas of the Naga Tribal Area, consist of small broken ranges, running generally north-east and south-west. The greater part of this tract (in which very extensive and valuable seams of coal exist) is uncultivated and forest-clad.

On the southern face the Garo and Khasi Hills rise very abruptly from the plains, and present a succession of precipitous faces, into which the rivers, fed by the enormous rainfall of this region, have cut deep gorges as they issue upon the swamps of North Sylhet. The level line forming the horizon of the plateau is not broken until the Barail is reached, where the contour becomes rugged and irregular, though the sides are precipitous. In the Garo Hills, the lower portions of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Barail range, the slopes are forest-clad. In the upper and central plateau of the Khasi Hills, and the greater portion of North Cachar the landscape is one of undulating

grassy hills, with occasional groves of pine and oak.

The Lushai Hills, which divide Assam from Burma, consist of sandstones and shales of tertiary age thrown into long folds, the axes of which run in a nearly north and south direction. They are for the most part covered with dense bamboo jungles and rank undergrowth, but in the eastern portion, owing probably to a smaller rainfall, open grass-covered slopes are found, with groves of oak and pine interspersed with rhododendrons. These hills are inhabited by the Lushais and cognate tribes, but the population is extremely scanty.

The general outline of this mass of elevated country is that of the letter "T", with a top line running from north-east to south-west and a support running from west to east. The general type of the people is Mongolian, but there are so many different tribes and languages that it will be hard to point any other bond of connection. Accuracy in crop statistics cannot be expected, but so far as they go, they show that over 70 per cent of the cultivation is under rice; a good deal of rough cotton exported from the Garo Hills and potatoes are grown extensively in the K. & J. Hills. Except in the latter district and in a part of Naga Hills, land is cultivated usually in the most primitive fashion by jhuming—a clearing being made in the jungle by fire and a number of different crops being sown together in holes dug beneath the ashes and harvested as they mature.

## (2) Geology and Minerals

Geologically the Indian sub-Continent comprises all the rock formations of all ages from the Archaean to the present day, covering a period of nearly 2,000 millions of years. The Extra-Peninsular-Region, though containing some very old rocks, is predominantly a region in which the sediments, laid down in a vast geosyncline continuously from the Cambrian to the early Tertiary periods, have been ridged up and folded into the great Himalayan mountain chain. They thus show enormous thickness of sedimentary rocks representing practically the whole geological column, which have been compressed and raised into dry land only in geologically very recent times. The core of the mountains is composed of granitic intrusions of presumably Tertiary age. The southern fringe of the Hama-

layas bordering on the plains consists of fresh-water and estuarine deposits of Mio-Pliocene age derived largely from the rising Himalayas. The Indo Gangetic-Brahmaputra plains are built up of layers of sands, clays, etc., of geologically very recent date, filling up deep depression between the Peninsula and Extra-Peninsula.

### **Eastern Himalayan Sub-Region**

The Eastern Himalayan Sub-Region, consisting of Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam Hills and Plains including Tripura and Manipur, comprises the Assam and Darjeeling Himalayas in the north, the Shillong plateau in the middle, the Sadiya tract, Naga Hills, Manipur and Lushai Hills along the Burma border in the east and the intervening alluvial plains of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. The sub-Himalayan hills of Darjeeling, Buxa Duars, Aka, Dafia and Abor hills overlooking the alluvial plains carry phyllites, dolomitic limestones, and quartzites of the Buxa series overlain by loose-textured Nahan sandstones and clays of Siwalik or Upper Tertiary age. A narrow band of highly crushed coal-bearing sandstone of Lower Gondwana age occurs at the junction of the Buxa series and Nahan sandstones as a result and over-thrust. The powdery coal from this horizon is being worked and supplied to the various tea gardens of Upper Assam and the numerous brick kilns of U. P., Bihar, Bengal and Assam. The annual output of coal from this area increased from 9,156 tons in 1946 to 22,454 tons in 1950. There are large reserves of high-grade dolomite in the Buxa Duars suitable for the manufacture of magnesium metal, dolomite refractories, etc. The dolomite boulders washed down the hill streams area being burnt into dolomite-lime and supplied to the various towns and gardens of Upper Bengal, Assam and Bihar, the daily output of lime being about 800 to 1,000 maunds.

The Shillong Plateau in Central Assam consisting of the Garo, Khasi, Jaintia and Mikir hills, is composed of crystalline rock, known as the Shillong series. The southern fringes of these hills in the Tura and Cherra region and Sylhet carry thick formations of massive sandstones, shales and limestones of Tertiary age. There are also some lava flows of Mesozoic age in the Khasi hills known as the Sylhet traps. The large reserves of limestones in the Sylhet region are used for lime-burning and cement manufacture and the production of limestone and lime for the year 1949 amounted to 4,648 tons and 25,602

tons, respectively. The reserves of Tertiary coal in the Garo hills are fairly large and the present output of coal is of the order of 30,000 to 40,000 tons annually. The sillimanite deposits in the Sonapahar and Nongstoin state in the Khasi hills are, so far, the only large workable deposits of the mineral in the world. The area is difficult of access and the mineral is being worked only on a small scale, mainly for export.

The Sadiya tract, Naga, Manipur and Lushai hills in eastern and south-eastern Assam carry thick fossiliferous sandstones, shales, clays and limestones of Tertiary age. Important seams of Tertiary coal occur along the foot of the Patkoi range and Naga hills in Upper Assam and are being actively exploited since many years, the present annual output being of the order of 250,000 to 300,000 tons. In addition there are apparently good reserves of petroleum in the Tertiary formations in these areas, which form the only source for petroleum at present in India. The Digboi fields in the Lakhimpur district is the most successful field in Assam with an annual production of around 65 million gallons of crude petroleum.

### **(3) Climate and Rainfall**

This division has a fairly good network of rain gauge stations and observatories. The climate of the area is characterised by coolness and a high percentage of humidity.

In winter, the minimum temperature sometimes falls below the freezing point. Snowfall is rare in this area.

During April and May when rainfall over the plains of north India is very little, this division receives over 20 per cent of its annual rainfall. In the hottest months, the temperature at Shillong has not exceeded 86°F. In March to May violent thunderstorms occur accompanied by high winds and heavy local rainfall.

May to September is the rainiest period of the year in the division. The rainfall is very heavy on the southern face of the Khasi Hills, Cherrapunji getting on an average 425" of rain per annum. The latter recorded a rainfall of 905" in 1861, 366" in the month of July only! As much as 40" in a day has been recorded at this place! But at Shillong, which is less than 30 miles away from Cherrapunji, it is only about 85" per year. Shillong, though only 30 miles distant from Cherrapunji, where the greatest recorded rainfall



in the world is found, has the clouds drained of their humidity long before they reach it by the immense precipitation along the southern edge of the plateau and in the central table land which lies some 1,000 feet above the site of the station. Cherrapunji, on the other hand, is so placed as to exemplify all the conditions needed for a great rainfall. It stands, immediately overlooking the plains at a height of 4,455 feet, on a small plateau of thick-bedded sandstones, bounded on two sides by 2,000 feet of sheer descent, which close in gorges debouching southwards on Sylhet, which is practically at sea-level. The south-west monsoon, sweeping over the flooded tracts of East Bengal and Sylhet, blows up these gorges, as well as on the southern face of the general scarp, and having reached the heads of the gorges, ascends vertically, having been previously stopped by this barrier of cliffs. The air which is saturated with moisture rises, cools and is precipitated in the form of rain. Cherra is thus during summer months surrounded, or nearly so, by vertically-ascending currents of saturated air, the dynamic cooling of which is the cause of the enormous precipitation. It lies, moreover, at the elevation of 4,000 ft., which is found in the Himalayas to be that of maximum precipitation. The annual average varies greatly in different parts of the station, although the whole extent of the plateau is not much more than a couple of square miles. Less than 5" of rain ordinarily falls in the four months of November to February, and nearly 300 in the months of June to August. In spite of its enormous rainfall, Cherra is neither an unhealthy nor an unpleasant place of residence. The plateau is admirably drained and the water is quickly carried off. Much of the rain falls at night and the number of hours of sunshine is considerable. At Jowai, which lies at about the same distance southeast of Shillong, the average annual rainfall is about 140". In the Naga Hills, rainfall varies from about 75" at Kohima to 130" at Wakchung. At Aijal in the Lushai hills, the annual rainfall is 83". Thunderstorms also occur during this period.

#### (4) Soil.

See under Assam Plains Division

### MANIPUR.

#### Physical Aspects, Climate and Rainfall

Manipur consists of a tract of hilly country with a valley about 30 miles long and 20 miles

wide, shut in on every side. The Manipur valley is about 2,500 ft. above sea level and the greatest altitude is reached to the northeast, where peaks rise upwards of 13,000 ft. above sea level. There is at present an observatory at Imphal, the most important town of this area, but sufficient records are not available for describing the climatological features. There are, however, a few rain-recording stations in the area with some data.

It may be inferred that the general climate of the area is cool and pleasant. Even in the hot season, the nights and mornings are cool. In the winter, there are sharp frosts at night and heavy fogs hang over the valley till the day is well advanced. The average annual rainfall is 58" at Imphal, 69" at Ukhrul, 125" at Kongpokpia and 157" at Tamenglong. As in most parts of Assam, most of the rainfall occurs during the period May to October. December and January are the driest months of the year. Taking the division, as a whole, the average annual rainfall (excluding hills exceeding 3,500 ft. in height, above sea level) is 58" and rainy days 103.

Information regarding (1) geology and minerals and (2) soil is not available.

### TRIPURA

#### Physical Aspects, Climate and Rainfall

The country and this small division is broken up by a number of hill ranges with marshy valleys in between. The hills are not more than 3,200 feet in height. Meteorological data other than rainfall are not available for the area. Agartala, the principal town of the division has rainfall data for more than seventy years and there are a few other rain-recording stations with data for shorter periods.

The climate of the area is damp with moderate temperature. As in most parts of Assam, most of the rainfall occurs during the period May to October, December and January being the driest months of the year. The rainiest month of the year is June for the major portion of this division. The average annual rainfall varies from 66" at Amarpur to 75" at Sonamura, 79" at Agartala, 89" at Belonia and over 95" at Dharmanagar and Kailashar. Taking the division as a whole, it gets an annual rainfall of 83".

Information regarding (i) geology and minerals and (ii) soil is not available.

## APPENDIX 3

# CENSUS TABULATION—FORMS AND PROCEDURE.

The following Memorandum No. 693/50-R.G., dated the 2nd July, 1950, issued by the Registrar General, explains the method of preparing main Census Tables, the system of classification adopted and their comparability with previous Census Tables.

### 1. Census Tabulation—Forms and Procedure :

The tabulation for the 1951 census will be done by handsorting of slips in Central Tabulation Office which will be set up by the State Census Superintendents for their respective areas. The offices will be organised on the same pattern as in 1931 census, when there was full tabulation on census materials. Instructions regarding the setting up of these offices and other matters connected with their administration will be issued in due course to the Superintendents.

In 1931, and earlier censuses, enumeration was done on schedules and the information in the Schedules was copied on slips which were later hand-sorted to produce various tables. In 1941, enumeration was done direct on slips which dispensed with the intermediate operation of slip copying. For the 1951 census also, enumeration will be done direct on slips which will be later sorted.

But at this census, in addition to the sorting of the slips to produce the tables, it is proposed to incorporate essential census information relating to every person enumerated in every village and every town/ward in a National Register of citizens which will be preserved as an unpublished administrative register for purpose of

reference during the inter-census decade. The Government of India have already invited State Governments to take steps for the preparation of the register. The purposes to be served by this register are fully explained in the letter addressed to all State Governments of which a copy is appended (Appendix I). The register will be compiled in the districts along with or immediately after enumeration and before tabulation operations start.

There will be four main differences between the procedure for tabulation adopted at the 1931 and earlier censuses and the procedure to be adopted at the next census. These are explained in paragraphs 2 to 5 below.

### 2. Substitution of Economic Classification for Classification based on Religion :

In the past, census slips were, at the very outset, sorted on the basis of religion, and the figures of population by religion thus obtained were the basis of village statistics. The separation of slips by religion and sex was maintained throughout the sorting operations; and thus certain census characteristics were cross tabulated by religion. During the tabulation of the 1951 census, the slips will be sorted, in the first

instance, into the following eight livelihood classes of the population :—

#### **Agricultural Classes**

- I. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned; and their dependants.
- II. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned; and their dependants.
- III. Cultivating labourers; and their dependants.
- IV. Non-cultivating owners of land; agricultural rent receivers; and their dependants.

#### **Non-Agricultural Classes**

Persons (including dependants), who derive their Principal Means of Livelihood from—

- V. Production other than cultivation.
- VI. Commerce.
- VII. Transport.
- VIII. Other services and miscellaneous sources.

The resulting figures will be given in the Primary Census Abstract (form with instructions given in Appendix II), and this Abstract will be the basis for village statistics. The slips as thus initially separated, will be kept separate throughout the sorting operations.

### **3. The Concurrent 10 per cent Sample :**

When the slips are initially sorted, a ten per cent sample will be taken out. (The method of taking of the sample is explained in the note attached to the Primary Census Abstract). The figures required for the Economic Tables (which are the first ones to be prepared), will be compiled separately for the 90 per cent slips and the 10 per cent samples. The two results will be combined to produce figures for the total population. The operations on the 90 per cent slips and the 10 per cent sample will proceed simultaneously. There will thus be a record for every census tract in each district, of the comparison between 10 per cent sample figures and the total figures; for the Economic Tables as well as many other tables. The "Age Tables", however, will be constructed, only from the 10 per cent sample.

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### **4. Household Size and Composition :**

In the past censuses, the characteristics of individuals only were tabulated. At the present census, certain characteristics of households will be sorted and tabulated. It is not possible to hand-sort for households, slips which relate to individuals. The National Register of Citizens which gives the details of the individuals arranged by households will be utilised for this purpose. The study of the households will be made on the basis of 4 per cent sample of households. An abstract from the National Register of Citizens called the "Census Abstract of Sample Households" (form with instructions gives in Appendix II), will be first prepared for the sample households. The construction of 'Household' (size and composition) table will be based on this abstract.

### **5. Preservation of Census Records and Registers :**

In the past, the abstract (first prepared in the process of sorting and compilation), was used for compiling village statistics, which were retained as unpublished administrative records by some States; and printed and published by others.

At the forthcoming census, the following records (prepared during the process of sorting and compilation) will be brought together and bound in a single manuscript volume, called the District Census Handbook :—

- (i) District Census Tables (furnishing district data with break-up for census tracts, within the district).
- (ii) Census Abstracts :—
  - (a) Primary Census Abstracts,
  - (b) Occupational Abstracts, and
  - (c) Census Abstracts of small-scale Industries.

The Sample Household Abstracts will be found together in a single manuscript volume separately. The forms of the Primary Census Abstracts and Sample Household Abstracts and their mode of preparation are described in Appendix II. The Occupational Abstracts will be compiled from Sorters' Tickets prepared during the sorting of slips for the Economic Tables. The census abstract of small-scale industries will be compiled from returns of the census now in progress.

It will be suggested to State Governments that the District Census Handbook (with or without the addition of other useful information relating to the district) should be printed and published in the same manner as "Village Statistics" in the past. The 'Sample Household Abstract' will be unpublished. Together with the National Register of Citizens, it will be used for purposes of reference, and also as a Sampling Base for Population Surveys in the inter-census decade. One of the columns of this Abstract is designed to facilitate the taking of Sub-Samples of the different livelihood classes separately.

**6. The following tables will be prepared and published for the 1951 census**

**A. General Population Tables**

- I. Area, Houses and Population.
- II. Variation in population during fifty years.
- III. Towns and villages classified by population.
- IV. Towns classified by population with variation since 1901.
- V. Towns arranged territorially with population by livelihood classes.

**B. Economic Tables**

- I. Livelihood Classes and Sub-Classes.
- II. Secondary Means of Livelihood.
- III. Employers, Employees and Independent Workers in Industries and Services by Divisions and Sub-divisions.

**C. Household and Age (Sample) Tables**

- I. Household (size and composition).
- II. Livelihood Classes by Age Groups.
- III. Age and Civil Condition.
- IV. Age and Literacy.
- \*V. Single year age returns.

**D. Social and Cultural Tables**

- I. Language.
- II. Religion.

**III. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.**

**IV. Migrants.**

**V. Displaced Persons.**

**VI. Non-Indian Nationals.**

**VII. Livelihood Classes by Educational Standards.**

**E. Summary Figures for Districts**

A copy of the form of each of the tables is appended to this Memorandum. Notes indicating the mode of preparation of the tables are also attached to the forms, where necessary.

Comparison between the foregoing tables and those prepared for the 1931 census is explained in the following paragraphs.

**7. A. General Population Tables**

I, II and IV follow the 1931 model without change.

Table III follows an old table and provides some more information. Sex details will be given for each group of towns and villages. The groups in the table will be arranged under three major groups, for each of which the number of towns and villages and population by sexes will also be given. This change has been made, with reference to a recommendation of the Population Commission of the United Nations.

The basis of Table V differs from the 1931 census. In the 1931 census the population of individual towns was shown classified by religion. Now it is proposed to give the same information under livelihood classes, instead of religion.

**8. B. Economic Tables**

These correspond to the "Occupation or Means of Livelihood Table" prepared at the 1931 census. The forms, as well as the contents of these tables, have been recast completely. This is the most important among the changes made in census tabulation and is fully explained in a separate Memorandum on the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme (Part II).

**9. C. Household and Age (Sample) Tables**

Table I Household (size and composition) is new, as already explained in para 5 above.

\* Please see para. 2(i) of the proceedings of the meeting of the Population Advisory Committee (Part III).

Tables II, III, IV and V will be prepared on the 10 per cent sample slips.

Table II (Livelihood Classes by age groups) is new. Tables III and IV correspond to similar tables of the 1931 census.

In the past, it was customary to apply a smoothing formula to the actual age returns. The published tables contained only the smoothed figures. This was done in order to offset the observed preference for particular digits (especially 0), in actual age returns. At this Census, tabulation will proceed on the basis that the census should publish the information as actually furnished by the people.

Accordingly, it is proposed :—

- (a) to discard the smoothing formula.
- (b) to adopt certain decennial groups recommended by the U. N. Population Commission which includes all the digits with the most favoured digit (0) at the centre; and are, therefore, likely to be most free from the effect of preferences for particular digits and
- (c) to prepare and publish a table of individual year age returns (which may be made use of by actuaries and research workers for constructing any desired age groups and smoothing the figures by any desired formula.)

#### 10. D. Social and Cultural Tables.

Tables I (Language), II (Religion) and IV (Migrants), correspond to similar tables prepared at the 1931 census. The form of Table I has been simplified in so far as it relates to Mother tongue. Table IV (Migrants), will be in the same form as the Birthplace table of the 1931 census.

Table III furnishes the numbers of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The numbers of Anglo-Indians will be indicated on a fly-leaf. Other race-caste-tribe data published in 1931 and prior censuses will not be published. (But such data as may be required for the Backward Class Commission will be collected and preserved).

Table V is new and relates to displacement of population consequent on partition.

Table VI relates to non-Indian Nationals. It is new and based on a suggestion made by U. N. Population livelihood classes.

#### 11. E. Summary Figures for Districts

This table will furnish selected data, by districts in the All-India Table and correspondingly by Tehsils/Thanas in the State Tables. The selected data will be in the same form as in previous censuses; but livelihood classes will be substituted for religion."

## APPENDIX 4

# VITAL STATISTICS OF ASSAM

The following is a note kindly contributed by Major S. M. Dutt, Director of Public Health, Assam :—

“There are three main agencies for the collection of vital statistics in this State, viz :—

Municipal.  
Police.  
Revenue.

The details of the system employed are as follows :—

### (1) MUNICIPALITIES

- (a) In some towns to which Bengal Act IV of 1873 has been extended, Assistant Surgeons II who have undergone a Sanitary Surveyor's course in Bombay or D. P. H. and Hygiene or L. P. H. course from the Calcutta University have been appointed as Health Officers.

The Health Officer is made Registrar of Births and Deaths under the Act and vital occurrences are reported to him by householders. The monthly return is made to the District Medical Officer of Health and through him to the Director of Public Health.

- (b) Towns (Municipalities and Unions) in which the Act is in force but in which a Health Officer has not been appointed.

Reports are made to the Police or the Gaonbura who reports to the Municipal office clerk or other person who has been made Registrar to the Municipality. The Municipality forwards the monthly return to the District Medical Officer of Health.

### (2) RURAL AREAS (Other than tea gardens and Railways)

Registration in rural areas is non-compulsory.

- (a) Registration in Cachar and the permanently settled areas of the Goalpara district is done through the agency of the Police.

Chowkidars enter the village births and deaths in Hatchitas (village register of Births and Deaths). As these persons are frequently illiterate, it is usually necessary for them to take the registers to the Panchayat or other persons to have the occurrences entered weekly. The hat-chitas are brought by them to the Police Station or out-posts at muster parades which are held once a week, once a fortnight and once a month. The entries are copied in the thana registers and a monthly return made to the District Medical Officer of Health.

(b) In other districts (Kamrup, Nowgong, Darrang Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and some areas of Goalpara) registration is done by the revenue personnel. The Gaonburas in the villages keep the Hat-chitas in the same manner as the chowkidars. The hat-chitas are submitted monthly to the Mouzadar or Mandal of the sub-circle and copied into the registers. If a Mouzadar's circle exceeds 100 sq. miles in area, the statistics are copied into the registers of a Mandal. The Mouzadar compiles a monthly return from reports of Gaonburas and Mandals and submits it to the District Medical Officer of Health.

(3) **TEA GARDENS** Here registration is compulsory. The Tea Garden Managers are required to keep registers of births and deaths and submit a monthly return to the District Medical Officer of Health through the Deputy Commissioners or Sub-Divisional Officer.

(4) **REGISTRATION WITHIN RAILWAY LIMITS (NOT COMPULSORY)** Station Masters keep registers of births and deaths within railway limits. These are submitted monthly to the Chief Medical Officer of the Railway who makes a monthly return to the Director of Public Health.

(5) **HILLS DISTRICTS** Registration is not compulsory except in the towns of Shillong, Jowai, Tura and Kohima where people report their vital occurrences to the Gaonburas or the Police.

In Shillong reports are made to the Health Officer.

The following are the Rules and Regulations now in force in the State regarding registration and compilation of births and deaths :—

(1) Assam Act II of 1935 (Assam Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1935).

(2) Assam Act V of 1936 (Assam Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act 1936).

(3) Regulation No. II of 1943 (Mikir Hills Births and Deaths Regulation).

The appointment of literate chowkidars and Goanburas would remove the need for assistance of others in filling in the registers. But this is not all. **Thana officers and Mouzadars take no interest in the matter.** Detection of crime and criminals and the collection of revenue are much more their concern. If these officials could be made to take some interest in the improvement of collection of vital statistics, the chowkidars and Goanburas would be more accurate in their collection of vital statistics. Registration in towns which have Health Officers is much better, both as regards accuracy and classification.

There was no change in the agencies for the collection of vital statistics either in urban or rural areas till 1944 when the Public Health Department was re-organised. Since 1944, Rural Health Inspectors have been made responsible for the compilation of vital statistics and they have to check the accuracy of the collection of vital statistics during their ordinary tours. With the implementation of the Post-War Anti-smallpox Vaccinators Scheme of this Department in 1948, Health Assistants appointed under the Scheme also help in accurate compilation of vital statistics.

In order to improve the collection of vital statistics a system of giving rewards to selected Goanburas whose work was found to be satisfactory was introduced in the year 1922-23 as an experimental measure. **The experiment failed** as no substantial improvement was noticeable after giving it a trial for about ten years. Goanburas do not consider the concessions and emoluments which they received sufficient inducement for additional duty. Any improvement in registration in rural areas in the future would depend on the spread of education which would ultimately provide a body of literate men for appointment as Goanburas or Chowkidars.

As stated above primary agents for collection of vital statistics in Assam are Goanburas, village headmen, Chowkidars, Laskars, etc. They are not literate. **There is no doubt that the collection of registration is defective.** Under the circumstances, in the compilation and checking of vital occurrences by the P.H.D. staff,



errors cannot be avoided. The quality and quantity of the registrars must be improved. The Mouzadars or Police Officers are the registrars in rural areas. These are few and not within easy reach from all villages. The present number of registrars should be increased by appointing the village school teachers also in suitable areas as Registrars. Such arrangement would facilitate quick registration without much omissions. The school teachers are poorly paid officers and they would certainly take up this duty if they are paid a small allowance."

While it is universally known that the vital statistics of India are defective and underestimated, it is not so well known how the vital statistics in Assam are even more so. The Director of Public Health in his above note frankly admits: "There is no doubt that the collection of registration is defective". Let us now see how seriously defective it is:

## 2. Vital Statistics in 1911-21

TABLE A

*Natural Increase according to Vital Statistics and the Census compared*

District and Natural Division	Excess (+) or deficiency (—) of births over deaths (1911-1921)	Increase (+) or decrease (—) of natural population of 1921 compared with 1911
1	2	3
<b>ASSAM</b>	<b>+ 60,345</b>	<b>+ 417,154</b>
<b>Brahmaputra Valley</b>	<b>+ 18,401</b>	<b>+ 305,167</b>
Goalpara	+ 18,089	+ 64,847
Kamrup	+ 19,250	+ 37,671
Darrang	— 17,759	+ 28,210
Nowgong	+ 3,656	+ 26,670
Sibsagar	+ 9,658	+ 90,542
Lakhimpur	— 14,493	+ 57,227
Surma Valley	+ 41,944	+ 111,987
Cachar Plains	+ 10,329	+ 53,172
Sylhet	+ 31,615	+ 58,815

Table A given above is based on Subsidiary Table V of 1921 Census Report given at page 27. It gives natural increase according to vital statistics and the Censuses of 1911 and 1921. But for the disturbing effect of migration, the excess of births over deaths in the decade should be equal to the actual census increase; hence, we might suppose that the figures for natural population, which are deduced by excluding immigrants and including emigrants, would correspond with the vital statistics.

It is not so. Columns 2 and 3 of the Table A show a discrepancy which appears grotesque. The difference for the population under registration amounts to over 350,000. In Darrang and Lakhimpur, the recorded death rates considerably exceed the birth rates; yet the census discloses substantial additions in both districts to the natural as well as to the actual population. As Lloyd remarks, **it is obvious that the figures are useless for purposes of comparison or checking with the census figures.** There are, however, other reasons. One is the fact that census immigrants and emigrants are only counted every ten years. There are many immigrants who come during the decade and die before the date of the census; these swell the death returns, but do not appear in the census. Again, those who emigrate during the decade and who die outside the province before the census date will cause a deficit in the census natural population but have no corresponding entry in the death registers of the province. The number of these is, however, very much less than that of the former class. When they are allowed for, the discrepancy becomes less absurd, though still large enough to discount any serious deductions, except the one that **the registration of vital statistics is still very imperfect.**

The system of registration and its accuracy also vary in different parts of the province, and it is, therefore, of doubtful utility to quote the figures except for comparison of the same areas at different times. **Births are probably more often omitted than deaths,** which is another reason for the great divergence between the census figures and those of the vital statistics. The then Director of Public Health was of opinion that the influenza epidemic had a very disturbing effect on registration, owing to the general insecurity caused by the ravages of the disease, and also in many cases to illness and death of the reporting and recording agents.

Lloyd is not an exception in his emphatic opinion given above. All previous and subsequent Census reports have commented upon the great inaccuracy of the registration of vital statistics in Assam. McSwiney remarks in his report for 1911 that "the inaccuracy is so great that there is danger of inferring that the **present system of collecting vital statistics is absolutely useless**".

### 3. Vital Statistics in 1921-1931

Mullan in 1931 wrote :

“Vital statistics, as already stated, are legally compulsory only in urban areas and in tea gardens. We would, therefore, expect to find that in these areas at least, they are approximately accurate. In fact, however, this is very far from being the case. The annual enquiries carried out by vaccination inspecting staff show that in urban areas the **percentage of omissions** can be **as high as 40 per cent.** This is unusual but reported omissions of over 10 per cent are quite common. In 1928 for example the reported percentage of omissions of births was over 10 per cent in seven towns and the omission of deaths was over 10 per cent in three towns. This may not appear very high but we must remember that, as stated by the Director of Public Health in his report for 1930, The number of omissions detected does not represent the actual condition of registration in the various towns, but within certain limits, is an index of the activity of the inspecting staff”. In Shillong where no attempt has been made to verify the registration for many years the Health Officer informs me that the omission of vital occurrences may be 50 per cent. It must be at least that, as although the Public Health Report gives 14.36 for the death rate for Shillong for 1930, the actual death rate worked out on the population of 1930 (instead of 1921) comes to 9.7 which, of course, is incredible.

It is clear, therefore, that in urban areas the registration is extremely unsatisfactory and that it is quite probable that the total percentage of omissions is as high as 30 per cent.

In tea gardens also where one might hope for a considerable degree of accuracy there is, I fear, no doubt that the reported statistics cannot be relied on. A doctor who had recently come to Assam and who became particularly interested in the matter instituted a strict system of registration in his gardens with the result that the previous *mamuli* death rate of 17 to 20 per mille went up at once to over 30, purely as a result of stricter supervision of registration. It is difficult to hazard even a guess as to the total percentage of omissions on the tea gardens of the province in which nearly a million persons reside. I have myself no doubt that it is high.

In any case I have, I hope, made it quite clear that even in the areas in the province where it is legally an offence not to register births and deaths the registration is extremely unsatisfactory and the percentage of omissions is large. If this is so in compulsory areas, what we may well ask, can be expected in the rural areas where the recording agency is generally almost illiterate and sometimes quite illiterate (the actual writing being done by a literate relation) and subject to practically no supervision or check. The only possible answer is that the **percentage of omissions must be very high indeed.** Hence, it appears that as far as we can tell from the tests actually carried out in Assam 30 per cent of omissions is not at all an improbable figure to take for the province as a whole. Births are apparently more commonly omitted in Assam than deaths.”

4. Both the birth and death rates of Assam, along those of the rest of India, suffer from 4 major defects.

(1) **Registration does not cover the total population.** As we have seen above in Assam the population under registration is only that within Assam Plains, *viz.*, 7,805,558 out of a total of 9,043,707, *i.e.*, 86.3 per cent only. No figures are available for the remaining 13.7 per cent of the population except for Shillong, Jowai, Tura and Kohima. It must be clearly realized that registration is compulsory only in the tea gardens and the municipal towns, while that in the rural area being non-compulsory.

(2) Published rates, till lately were calculated on the wrong population. Until 1932 in order to evade the problem of post censal population estimates, the authorities simply calculated birth and death rates on the basis of the population under registration at the last **census**. In other words it can be the same population base throughout the ten years until the next census. Pointed reference was made to this defect by the 1931 Census Report of Assam, as this practice had the effect of artificially inflating the rates towards the end of each decade especially in those decades when the population grew rapidly. Mullan even proceeded to calculate the corrected rates for all Plains districts under registration *vide* Appendix to Chapter IV p. 72 of 1931 Report. During the last decade, however, this defect has been removed in Assam as in other states.

(3) **No age specific rates were published.** Since births statistics were ordinarily not published according to the age of the mother, we are not in a position to calculate refined rates.

(4) **Birth reporting is incomplete.** Even though an area may be "under registration", this does not mean that this reporting of births is complete. On the contrary, it is notoriously incomplete. In Assam as in other States the number of births reported was on the average between 30 and 50 per cent below the actual number. For neither any district nor any single year can the published figures be accepted as representative of the total number of births.

No vital statistics are recorded in the States of Manipur and Tripura and hence these two states do not feature in my discussion here. However, under the new Scheme of the improvement of population data sponsored by the Registrar General of India and approved by the Governments of all the three States, a new scheme for entrusting the work of registration of vital statistics to the personnel of the Revenue Department, *viz.*, Mandals, Patwaris and Kanungos, will operate in the financial year 1952-53 in the three sample districts of Goalpara, Sibsagar, and United K. & J. Hills. In the subsequent financial years, it is proposed to extend the scheme to all the districts. The Scheme will apply even to the States of Manipur and Tripura as well. This well thought out scheme based on Random Sampling is bound to go a very long way in giving us more accurate vital statistics than are available so far in Assam.

(5) **Meagre or wrong classification of causes of deaths.** Apart from omissions to record births and deaths another deficiency of the vital statistics in Assam is the **meagre or wrong classification of causes of deaths.** Of course, from the point of view of this report, the omissions to record births and deaths are of far greater importance than the defective record of the causes of deaths. It is not difficult to realise that census of deaths are wrongly or incorrectly classified.

Most states have only a limited number of certifiable causes of deaths. As reported in statistics for India as a whole, there are only 8 categories as follows :

- (i) cholera
- (ii) small-pox

- (iii) plague
- (iv) fever
- (v) dysentery and diarrhoea
- (vi) respiratory diseases
- (vii) injuries
- (viii) other causes.

Of these the most specific are the first three and our information on this is better than on other diseases. "The only diseases for which registration can be said to have been reached a fair standard of accuracy are cholera, small-pox and plague, these being the most common and most vital of the epidemic diseases which periodically devastate India\* ". For most other diseases such as T.B., Malaria, pneumonia, syphilis, etc., there is no way of knowing what the incidence and prevalence are. The main cause is that India, particularly Assam, is very ill served with comprehensive rural medical services. Most people in Assam die without ever having been seen by a doctor. The man who first reports the death (if it is registered at all) and who shall make the diagnosis is the village headman or *chaukidar*. This ill-paid, ill-qualified, illiterate person is the sole representative of the Government in a majority of the villages and has a multitude of odd duties to perform besides collecting vital statistics. He attends to the personal needs of touring officers, reports crimes, keep watch over bad characters and supplies information on a bewildering variety of subjects. His low wage is sometimes paid by land grant, sometimes by a mere pittance of a salary. As Dr. Gyan Chand says, "He has to collect information from the people who are under no obligation to give it to him and do not and cannot appreciate the necessity for it. "The village headman is certainly not learned in medical affairs. In most instances of death it is he who must state the 'cause'. There is usually no qualified practitioner to give him any aid. The *Chaukidar's* slogan is "when in doubt call it 'fever' ". In the published reports 60 per cent of the total deaths are ascribed to 'fevers' and over 25 per cent to the omnibus category "other causes". These proportions have remained virtually unchanged ever since death records began to be kept in India. They show, of course, that the cause of death is unknown in at least 85 per cent of the reported cases".

\* Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India, Annual Report 1932—page 28.

Because of such poor vital statistics inadequate in their coverage and incorrect in their accuracy, comparisons must be made with great caution. Above all, it is not safe to compare different regions or to compare the city with the country. Not only are different diseases notifiable in different states and towns, but there are varying degrees of completeness and accuracy as between one region and another. In spite of the defects

in the existing scheme of registration of births and deaths, however, the registered birth and death rates cannot be condemned out as absolutely useless. One of the best use that can be made of them is the determination of trends for given regions; though even here the lack of refinement in delineating the causes of death makes such determination of only limited value\*.

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\* Kingley Davis.

# NET MIGRATION-CUM-REGISTRATION ERROR, IN ASSAM AND ASSAM PLAINS

(1921-30 and 1931-50)

## 1. Net migration in Assam (1921-30)

1921 population of Assam as  
then constituted. 7,990,246  
*Minus* 1921 Manipur. 384,016

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1921 population of British  
Assam as then constituted. 7,606,230 (A)

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1921 British territory born  
in Assam including Mani-  
pur. 6,319,284

*Minus* British territory born  
in Manipur. 4,117

---

1921 British territory born  
in Assam as then constituted. 6,315,167 (B)

∴ A-B=Immigrants in Assam as then con-  
stituted.  
=1,291,063 (C)

As this includes immigrants into Sylhet, we  
shall have to make adjustments on that score.

1921 Population of Sylhet. 2,541,341

1921 population (British-born)  
of Sylhet. 2,373,439

---

Immigrants 1921 into  
Sylhet. = 167,902 (D)

Now to arrive at the number of immigrants  
for Pak Sylhet separately.

1921 population of Cachar as  
then constituted. = 527,228

1921 population of N. C.  
Hills. = 26,744

---

∴ 1921 population of  
Cachar plains. 500,484

From main Table A-II we have 751,560 as  
the population of Cachar as now constituted  
(i.e., Cachar Plains *plus* Karimganj).

∴ 1921 population of pre-  
sent Karimganj Sub-division. = 251,076 (E)

Assume immigration for Karimganj Sub-divi-  
sion to be proportionate to its population, from  
the total number of immigrants viz., 167,902  
for the total population at Sylhet which was  
2,541,341. This comes to 16,588.

∴ Immigrants for Karimganj  
Sub-division in 1921. = 16,588 (F)

∴ Immigrants for Pak  
Sylhet in 1921.

= D—F

= 167,902—16,588

= 151,314 (G)

∴ Immigrants for  
1921 Assam as now  
constituted. = C - G

= 1,291,063—151,314

= 1,139,749 (H)

i.e., 1,140 thousands.

We shall have to make similar adjustments of 1931 figures as we did in the case of those of 1921 while working out the number of immigrants in 1931 for Assam as now constituted.

1931 population of Assam (1931 Report-Part II-Tables)	9,247,857
Minus Manipur in 1931.	445,606

∴ 1931 population of British Assam as then constituted  
(including Khasi States). = 8,802,251 (A)

1931 British territory born in Assam.	= 7,396,359
Minus British territory born in Manipur.	= 5,246

1931 British territory born in Assam minus Manipur. = 7,391,113 (B)

∴ Immigrants into 1931 Assam as then constituted. = A—B  
= 1,411,138 (C)

As this includes immigrants into Sylhet, a major portion of which has gone to Pakistan, we shall have to make adjustments on that score.

1931 population of Sylhet.	= 2,724,342
1931 British territory born in Sylhet.	= 2,584,985

∴ Immigrants (1931) into Sylhet. = 139,357 (D)

We must now arrive at the number of immigrants for Pak Sylhet separately in 1931.

1931 population of Cachar (including N. C. Hills).	= 570,531
1931 population of N. C. Hills.	= 32,844

∴ 1931 population of Cachar Plains. = 537,687

From main Table A-II given in Part II-A of the Report, we get the 1931 population of Cachar as now constituted. It is 803,694.

∴ 1931 population of present Karimganj Sub-division. = 803,694—537,687  
= 266,007 (E)

Assuming Karimganj's share of immigrants into Sylhet (D) as proportionate to its population from the total 139,357 immigrants into

Sylhet for Sylhet's population of 2,724,342, we get immigrants for Karimganj Sub-division in 1931.

= 13,607 (F)

∴ Immigrants for Pak Sylhet in 1931.

= D—F  
= 125,750 (G)

∴ Immigrants into 1931 Assam as now constituted.

= C—G  
= 1,411,138—125,750  
= 1,285,388 (H)  
i.e., 1,285 thousand.

Emigration can almost be ignored because "the figures are negligible and there has been very little change in the volume or direction of emigration since 1921" (1931 Census Report). Yet for the sake of as great and necessary accuracy as we can possibly attain, let us consider it. In 1921, out of a total number of 73 thousand immigrants from Assam (minus Manipur). Sylhet alone accounted for 54 thousand *vide* Subsidiary Table II on page 45 of 1921 Census Report. The share of Karimganj Sub-division on a mere proportionate population basis will be about 5,000; in view of the fact that immigrants went out more from Habiganj and other parts of Sylhet, we can assume Karimganj's share to be 4,000.

∴ Emigrants from Pak Sylhet will be 50,000 approximately.

∴ Total emigrants from Assam 73,000  
Minus emigrants from Pak Sylhet 50,000

∴ 1921 emigrants from Assam as now constituted 23,000 (I)

Hence emigrants from Assam as now constituted for 1931 will also be 23,000.

∴ 1931 emigrants from Assam as now constituted = 23,000 (J)

Now we can sum up the position with reference to immigrants and emigrants as follows:—

	Figures in thousands
Immigrants, 1931 Census	1,285
Deduct pre-1921 immigrants	1,140

Add estimated deaths of pre-1921 immigrants (33.3% for the decade) 380  


---

  
 Estimated number of immigrants (1921-30) = 525 (K)

Emigrants at 1931 Census 23  
 Deduct pre-1921 emigrants 23  


---

  
0

Add estimated deaths of pre-1921 emigrants (33.3% for the decade) 8  
 Estimated number of emigrants 8 (L)

∴ Net gain by migration = 525—8  
                                       = 517 thousands.  
 i.e., 8.9% of the mean population during 1921-30.  
 Net migration-cum-registration error (NMRE)  
 = Mean decennial growth rate—mean decennial rate of natural increase.  
 = 17.63—6.27 = 11.36.  
 Net registration error (NRE) = NMRE—NM  
 = 11.36—8.90 = 2.46%  
 i.e., 2.5% of the mean population of the decade (1921-30)

## II.—Net Migration into Assam Plains (1921-30)

The large number of 1,285 thousand immigrants in Assam in 1921 are distributed into its two Natural Divisions as follows:—

Assam Plains	1,238 immigrants in 1931
Assam Hills	47 immigrants in 1931
Assam	1,285 immigrants in 1931

In 1921 the total immigration has already been estimated at 1,140 thousand (I-H), which is slightly less than its 1931 counterpart. In 1931, immigration in the Hills Division was about 47,000; hence for 1921 we shall not be far out in putting it at 40,000. This ad hoc figure is borne out by subsidiary Table 1 (p. 45) given in 1921 Census Report. If so, immigration for the plains division will be 1,140 minus 40, i.e., 1,100 thousand for 1921.

	Figures in thousands.
Immigrants, 1931 Census	1,238
Deduct pre-1931 immigrants	1,100
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 138

Add estimated deaths of pre-1931 immigrants (33.3% for the decade) 367  


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 Estimated number of immigrants (1921-30) 505

In 1921 emigrants from the whole of Assam numbered 23,000; the Assam Plains will easily account for about 20,000. The number for 1931 will be more or less similar.

	Figures in thousands
New Emigrants at 1931 Census	20
Deduct pre-1921 emigrants	20
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 0

Add estimated deaths of pre-1921 emigrants (33.3% for the decade) 7  


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7

Net gain by migration  
 = 505—7  
 = 498 thousands.

i.e. 9.9 per cent of the mean population of the decade.

Net Registration Error (NRE).  
 = NMRE—NM  
 = 11.8—9.9  
 = 1.9 per cent of the mean population of the decade 1921-30.

## III.—Net Migration into Assam Plains (1931-50)

a=1931 population = 5,466 in thousands  
 b=1951 population = 7,806

∴ Mean population (1931-50) =  $\frac{1}{2}$  (a—b)  
                                       = 6,636

Immigrants 1951 Census	1,267
Deduct pre-1931 immigrants	1,238
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 29

Add estimated deaths of pre-1931 immigrants (66.6% for 2 decades) 825  


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Estimated number of immigrants (1931-50)	854
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Emigrants 1951 Census	45
<b>Deduct</b> pre-1931 emigrants	20
	<hr/> 25

Add estimated deaths of pre-1931 emigrants (66.6% for 2 decades) 13

Estimated number of emigrants (1931-50) 38

∴ Net gain by migration = 854—38  
= 816

i.e., 12.3% of the mean population of this decade.

∴ Registration Error = 21.7—12.3  
= 9.4 per cent of the mean population of the period (1931-50)

#### IV.—Net Migration into Assam (1931-50)

1951 population = a = 9,049 in thousands

1931 population = b = 6,344

Mean population

(1931-50) =  $\frac{1}{2}$  (a+b) = 7,694

Immigrants, 1951 Census	1,344
<b>Deduct</b> pre-1931 immigrants	1,285
	<hr/> 59

Add estimated deaths of pre-1931 immigrants (66.6% for 2 decades) 857

Estimate of immigrants (1931-50) 916

Emigrants, 1951 Census 45  
**Deduct** pre-1931 emigrants 23

---

22

Add estimated deaths of pre-1931 emigrants (66.6% for 2 decades) 15

---

37

Net gain by migration = 916—37  
= 879

i.e., 11.4 per cent of the mean population of 1931-50.

N R E = NMRE—NM  
= 21.7—11.4  
= 10.3 per cent of the mean population of period (1931-50)

## APPENDIX 6

# SAMPLE SURVEYS OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN DARRANG AND SIBSAGAR

### RESULT OF DARRANG SURVEY\*

TABLE XIII

Holdings :—A holding here means the land in which the family has permanent and heritable right of occupancy. As stated earlier the holders of periodic Khiraj settlement enjoy this right in law. But though not legally recognised the holders of annual Khiraj settlement also enjoy permanent heritable right of occupancy. Similarly the Nisf-khiraj tenants who have been in occupation of the land for generations enjoy heritable right of occupancy in practice. Therefore the land held by a family for purposes of our enquiry was defined in the instructions as land held under Government on periodic or annual terms of settlement and under Lakhirajdars and Nisf-khirajdars as occupancy tenants.

The total area held by the families in our Sample under the above systems of tenure is 37,517 bighas. As the Sample covers 2,613 families the average holding per family is 14.3 bighas.

The following Table XIII shows the distribution of holdings of different size in the Sample.

Families classified by size of holding and the total Area under each-size holding

Area of holding (in bighas)	Number of families in each class of column (1)	Percentage of total number of families to grand total of column (2)	Area under holding of each class in column (1) (in bighas)	Percentage of total area to grand total of column (4)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
0 ..	483	18.484	..	..
1-3 ..	325	12.438	580	1.55
4-5 ..	206	7.88	932	2.48
6-10 ..	401	15.35	3,221	5.59
11-15 ..	319	12.21	4,098	10.92
16-20 ..	256	9.797	4,540	12.10
21-25 ..	175	6.70	4,052	10.80
26-30 ..	118	4.516	3,266	8.70
31-50 ..	221	8.46	8,425	22.46
Above 50	109	4.171	8,403	22.40
Total ..	2,613	..	37,517	..

It will be seen that 18.484 per cent of the families are without land, while more than a quarter hold between 6 and 15 bighas per family. Families with more than 30 bighas each constitute only 12.6 per cent of the total. If we call these holdings big and distinguish them from medium holdings measuring between 11 and 30 bighas and small holdings with

\* Dr. M. N. Goswami, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., I.A.S., "A Survey of Rural Economic conditions in Darrang".

10 bighas or less, the proportion of each size in the total will be as follows:—

Small holdings	43.6 per cent
Medium holdings	44.1 " "
Large holdings	12.3 " "

In point of area covered the importance of these three types of holdings is just the reverse. Large holdings cover 44.8 per cent of the village land, medium holdings 42.5 per cent and small holdings only 12.6 per cent. That is to say 44.1 per cent of the families holding land own only 12.6 per cent of the village land with the result that their individual holdings are small measuring between 1 and 10 bighas. The average holding in this group is only 5 bighas as compared with 16 bighas and 51 bighas of the medium and large holding groups. Speaking broadly the typical holdings in the district as shown by our Sample are those which measure 5 bighas and 16 bighas. Between them they represent the conditions prevailing in 87 per cent of the agricultural holdings.

TABLE XV

**Families in the Sample classified according to the size of cultivable holdings**

Area of cultivable land held	No of families	Percentage of families in each class to the total
0	704	26.94
1-3	242	9.26
4-5	200	7.65
6-10	447	17.11
11-15	301	11.52
16-20	238	9.11
21-25	142	5.43
26-30	95	3.64
31-50	167	6.39
Above 50	77	2.95

Thus judging by the amount of cultivable land held the number of landless families in the Sample is 704 which is 27 per cent of the total.

The economic significance of the ownership of a holding of any size depends largely on the occupation of the holder. Table XVI shows the distribution of holdings of different size in the four occupation groups in the Sample.

TABLE XVI

**Families in the Sample grouped according to occupation and holdings**

Size of holding	Wholly Agricultural	Agriculture main occupation	Agriculture Subsidiary occupation	Independent of Agriculture	Total
0	126	110	14	233	483
1-3	116	84	23	102	325
4-5	107	66	11	22	206
6-10	246	121	16	18	401
11-15	196	92	13	18	319
16-20	169	67	10	10	256
21-25	108	53	10	4	175
26-30	85	31	2	0	118
31-50	142	62	8	9	221
Above 50	60	36	11	2	109
Total	1,355	722	118	418	2,613

It will be observed that the number of families returned as independent of agriculture is highest in the zero group of holdings and decline as the holdings increase in size. This points to the essentially agricultural character of the population. Further support to the same conclusion is lent by the fact that of the partly agricultural families more than 50 per cent belong to the group of holdings between 0 and 10 bighas. It will be shown later that a 10 bigha holdings is not adequate by any standard for an average family. That many stick to agriculture even with such holdings shows that they have no alternative occupation to follow. All these facts point to the essentially agricultural nature of the economy.

While the small size of most of the holdings in the Sample is a sufficient proof of the pressure of population in the district it is by no means the only index of that phenomenon. The statistics collected during the survey go to show that the holdings besides being reduced in size progressively have also been rendered incompact. They comprise fields that are not only small but scattered throughout the village separated by land in possession of others. Sometimes these fields lie in separate villages. There are 1,140 families in the Sample holding land outside their village. Of these 641 or more than half are in the Assamese group of villages, a group which as we have seen holds the largest proportion of its holdings in the small size. The corresponding figures for tribal, ex-tea garden labour and East Bengal immigrant villages are 129, 242 and 128, respectively.

The extent of fragmentation in the Sample is shown in Table XIX.

TABLE XIX

Distribution of Holdings according to number of Fragments

Number of fragments	Number of holdings	Percentage of total
1	118	19.58
2	119	20.09
3	112	15.35
4	94	11.00
5	66	7.39
6	63	5.81
7	63	4.68
8	48	3.44
9	36	2.43
10	25	1.52
11 to 15	101	6.55
16 to 20	18	1.18
above 20	16	0.96
Total	1,772	99.98

This table is based on 1,772 returns out of the 2,613 received from the district. The remaining returns were rejected as the information furnished was found to be unsatisfactory on examination. The total number of fragments in the 1,772 holdings analysed is 7,996, which gives an average of 4.5 fragments per holding. Table XIX shows that only 19.6 per cent of the holdings are in compact blocks. 34 per cent of the holdings have 5 fragments or more. Taking the size of an average holdings as 14.3 bighas, the size of an average fragment is 3.1 bighas or roughly one acre. But this does not give the correct picture. As Table XX below will show more than half the number of fragments studied measure 2 bighas or less.

TABLE XX

Distribution of Fragments according to Size

Size of fragment (in bighas)	Number	Per cent
Less than 1 ..	2,246	28.089
1-2 ..	1,771	22.149
2-5 ..	2,108	26.363
5-10 ..	1,121	14.019
10-15 ..	446	5.578
15-20 ..	136	1.701
20-30 ..	104	1.301
30-50 ..	51	0.638
Above 50 ..	13	0.162
Total ..	7,996	100.000

The extent of fragmentation in holdings of different size is shown in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI

Fragments per holding in holdings of various size

Size of holding (in bighas)	No. of holdings	No. of fragments	Fragments per holding
Less than 1	21	21	1.00
1-3 ..	238	427	1.79
4-5 ..	170	569	3.35
6-10 ..	326	1,413	4.33
11-15 ..	274	1,179	4.30
16-20 ..	211	1,019	4.83
21-25 ..	153	798	5.22
26-30 ..	101	595	5.89
31-50 ..	187	1,134	6.06
Above 50	91	841	7.04
Total ..	1,772	7,996	4.51

In the small holdings measuring 1 to 19 bighas the average number of fragments per holding is 3.2. The average area of holdings of this group has already been found to be 5 bighas. This means that an average fragment in the small size holding measures 1.5 bighas. In the group of medium holdings the average number of fragments per holding is 4.8 with an average area of 3.3 bighas per fragment. The average number of fragments per holding in large size holdings is 7.1 with an average area of 7 bighas per fragment. Thus the average number of fragments increases but the increase is not such as to counteract the effect of large area in the bigger holdings. So the average size of the fragments also follows generally the size of the average holding in each group.

It is clear that as a group the Assamese villages suffer from fragmentation of holdings in the extreme. Judged both by the number of fragments per holding and by the size of fragments the position is worst in this group of villages. As can be seen from the tables above nearly 60 per cent of the holdings in these villages have 5 fragments or more each. The corresponding percentages for each of the remaining groups being 19 per cent. That most of the fragments in the holdings in Assamese groups are small in size is also obvious from Table XXIII. As can be seen 65 per cent of the fragments in these holdings measure 2 bighas or less, while the corresponding percentages for the other groups range from 20 per cent to 23 per cent.

**Farms**

As stated earlier in this report the operating unit in our agricultural system is the family. By whatever standard we judge them the majority of our farms are small and may best be described as family farms. Permanent farm servants are maintained only in a limited number of farms. Casual hired labour, however, is in demand in the busy season.

In what follows we shall mean by a farm the cultivated holding comprising all the land operated by a single family with or without hire of labour. The distribution of farms in our Sample is shown in Table XXIV.

TABLE XXIV

**Distribution of farms according to size**

Size of farm (bighas)	No. of farms	Percentage of farms of all size	Total area covered by each size (bighas)	Percentage of total area under all size
1	2	3	4	5
1-3	121	6.08	254	0.76
4-5	133	6.69	589	1.77
6-10	493	24.79	4,036	12.14
11-15	443	22.27	5,669	17.04
16-20	301	15.13	5,215	15.68
21-25	170	8.55	3,961	11.91
26-30	102	5.13	2,876	8.65
31-50	168	8.45	6,282	18.89
Above 50..	58	2.92	4,371	13.14
Total ..	1,989	100.01	33,253	99.98

It will be seen from the above table that the total number of farms in the Sample is less than the number of holdings. As against 2,130 holdings with a total area of 37,517 bighas we have only 1,989 farms covering 33,253 bighas. There are three important reasons for this difference. In the first place many of the bigger land holders do not cultivate at all while some cultivate only part of their land. The land thus rendered available is rented by persons living in the village as well as by outsiders. Now the proportion of P/42—50.

land thus rented out to outside tenants is not shown in the farm area. Secondly a part of the holdings of most villagers is not fit for farming. Finally the villagers use part of their holdings for raising dwelling houses and for growing garden crops. All this land has to be deducted from the holdings to arrive at the area available to the villagers for farming.

The average area of a farm in the Sample is 16.7 bighas which again is slightly larger than the average area per holding. This also points to the presence of non-cultivating owners or land holders. The number of families in the Sample depending entirely on rent receipts for their income is 87. In addition there are 225 families who rent out the whole of their land while pursuing some independent occupations of their own. The majority of these families are owners of tiny holdings who are compelled to take up non-agricultural pursuits by the insufficiency of their land. A reference to Table XIII and XVI will show that 31 per cent of the families with holdings of 3 bighas or less each, are independent of agriculture. That is to say these land holders are not farmers of their owned land.

Turning next to the actual farmed area and size of individual farms we find that 37.56 per cent of the farms with 14.67 per cent of the cultivated area are between 1 and 10 bighas in size. The average area of the farm in this group is 6.5 bighas. In the next farm size ranging from 11 bighas to 30 bighas there are 1,016 farms (which is 51 per cent of the total) covering an area of 17,721 bighas (53 per cent of the area under all sizes). The average area per farm in this group is 17 bighas. Finally in the size 31 bighas and more, there are 226 farms with 10,653 bighas, an average of 47 bighas per farm.

The extent to which the farms under different size are owned and rented can be seen from the following Tables.

TABLE XXV

## Farms classified according to Size and Ownership of the Farm Land

Size of farm (bighas)	WHOLLY OWNED		WHOLLY RENTED		PARTLY OWNED AND PARTLY RENTED	
	No. of farms	Percentage of size group	No. of farms	Percentage of size group	No. of farms	Percentage of size group
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1-3 ..	72	59.50	47	38.84	2	1.65
4-5 ..	64	48.12	50	37.59	20	15.04
6-10 ..	193	39.15	144	29.21	155	31.44
11-15 ..	198	44.69	74	16.70	171	38.60
16-20 ..	139	46.18	35	11.63	127	42.19
21-25 ..	90	52.94	15	8.82	65	38.23
26-30 ..	59	57.84	4	3.92	38	37.25
31-50 ..	107	63.69	3	1.79	58	34.52
Above 50 ..	40	68.96	2	3.45	17	29.31
Total ..	962	..	374	..	653	..

TABLE XXVI

## Classification of farm area by size and type of farm

Size of farm (bighas)	Area under wholly rented farms	Rented area partly rented farms	Total rented area under farms of all types	Percentage area in column (4) to total area under all farms in each class	Owmed area under farms of each class	Percentage of area in column (6) to total area under all farms in each class
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1-3 ..	147	3	150	59.06	104	40.94
4-5 ..	160	46	206	34.97	383	65.03
6-10 ..	1,180	638	1,818	45.04	2,218	54.96
11-15 ..	698	1,081	1,779	31.38	3,890	68.62
16-20 ..	572	1,044	1,616	30.99	3,599	69.01
21-25 ..	339	643	982	24.79	2,979	75.21
26-30 ..	29	389	418	14.53	2,458	85.47
31-50 ..	108	911	1,019	16.22	5,263	83.78
Above 50 ..	133	274	407	9.31	3,964	90.69
Total ..	3,366	5,025	8,391	25.23	24,862	74.77

It will be seen from Table XXVI that the owned areas under farms of all size in the Sample is 24,862 bighas which is 75 per cent of the area of all farms. Nearly 60 per cent of this area is included in farms measuring 21 bighas or more. Of the rented area 40 per cent is covered by farms that are wholly rented. More than half the rented land in partly owned farms is rented by farmers of 20 bighas or less. Thus from the point of view of tenancy in the district 20 bighas constitute a convenient size for study. From Table XXV it will be seen that only 27 per cent of the partly owned farms are in the size group 21 bighas and above. In other words the bulk of the owned area in partly owned farms is concentrated in a comparatively small number of farms fairly large in size. This

is to be expected in view of the well-known tendency for owners of small holdings to enlarge the size of their farms by renting land from others.

As a consequence of the sub-division of holdings or alienation due to pressure from creditors the owned land in partly owned farms begins to decline and the farmer is thus compelled to increase his rented land in order to preserve the size of his farm. But in this he is not always successful. For the land which passes out of his hands through sub-division or alienation is not invariably available for subletting. Nor can he confidently depend upon other sources for the additional land he requires. He has thus to gamble in chances and the size of his farm

under such conditions is less certain than that of farms operated by full owners or part owners of farms that are predominantly owned. The number of such cultivators in our Sample is 1,095. These farmers own at least 75 per cent of their farm land. Their proportion to the total is 55 per cent. As regards tenant cultivators and cultivators of farms that are predominantly rented the size of their farm is dependent upon the availability of land for renting. The supply of such land is not fixed and depends upon the economic conditions of the class

of small owners who are not farmers by choice but are compelled to be so by lack of alternative employment. When opportunities for employment in non-agricultural industries expand they leave their farms and sublet the land to others. The return of these owners to their land on contraction of employment tends to curtail the supply of land for subletting. A glance at column 4 of Table XXV will show that there is no regular feature about the distribution of wholly rented farms.

### RESULTS OF SIBSAGAR SURVEY†

In this enquiry the term "holding" has been used to mean the land over which the individual or family possesses permanent hereditary right in any capacity, whether as owner, occupancy tenant, hereditary tenant, etc., the common link being the possession of a right, the inheritance to which is governed by law or by custom having the force of law. Thus the holding of an individual or family is comprised to all Khiraj land held under periodic or annual settlements directly under the Government, since, while the holders of periodic Khiraj possess the legal right of permanent occupancy and inheritance, the holders of annual Khiraj also have that right over their land except in rare cases where Government want the same for public purposes. Again, holding comprises also land held under Lakhirajdar and Nisf-Khirajdar as occupancy tenant, since the tenant's possession in such a case has seldom any chance of being disturbed. The land rented by him is in fact being occupied for generations, and, therefore, his right over it

may be designated as one of permanent occupancy and inheritance by custom.

In the whole sample of villages the total area covered by land holdings of all sizes is 40,503.23 bighas and with 2,682 families covered by these villages the average size of a holding per family comes out as 15.10 bighas, and the same per head of the population as 2.48 bighas\*. This figure of the average size of holding cannot however, be regarded as truly representative of the actual state of affairs. The real situation can be misrepresented under the disguise of simple average as it includes within its fold holding units of widely varying sizes and also families who are absolutely landless. So in the following table the holdings have been classified into size groups for the whole sample and their distribution has been indicated on family basis. As stated in a preceding chapter the real operating unit, in so far as the occupancy and utilization of the land in this State is concerned, is the family and holding per family carries much greater significance from agro-economic point of view than holding per individual.

† S. C. Sarma, M.Sc.(Cal.), M.A. (Columbia), "A Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Sibsagar".

\* Average number of persons per family in the surveyed villages is 6.1.



TABLE XXI

## Frequency Distribution of land holdings of various sizes—Sibsagar Sample

Holding Group	Size of holding (bighas)	No. OF FAMILIES		TOTAL AREA		Average Size of holding (per family in bighas)
		No.	Percentage to total	Area (in bighas)	Percentage to total area	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Small (10 bighas or less)	0	302	11.26	0	0	
	.. Less than 0.5 bigha.	30	1.12	8.36	0.02	
	1-3	239	8.91	446.70	1.10	
	4-5	217	8.09	975.64	2.41	
	6-10	524	19.54	4,189.68	10.34	
	Total	1,312	48.92	5,620.38	13.87	4.28
Medium (11-30 bighas)	.. 11-15	456	17.00	5,822.28	14.37	
	16-20	307	11.45	5,506.35	13.60	
	21-25	202	7.53	4,630.70	11.43	
	26-30	132	4.92	3,676.86	9.08	
	Total	1,097	40.90	19,636.19	48.48	17.90
Large (above 30 bighas)	.. 31-50	187	6.97	7,019.32	17.33	
	51-100	71	2.65	4,612.70	11.40	
	Above 100	15	0.56	3,614.64	8.92	
	Total above 30 bighas.	273	10.18	15,246.66	37.65	55.85
	Grand Total	2,682	100.00	40,503.23	100.00	15.10

In the above table the size group 1-3 bighas includes all holdings of size 0.5 bighas to 3.4 bighas. Other size groups are to be similarly interpreted. It will be seen that 302 families (11.26 per cent) are without land while another 30 families hold only less than half a bigha of land. The remaining families have holdings of wide variation ranging from 1 bigha to more than 100 bighas. Generally the size of holdings are found to be smaller in villages of fertile soil, good location and possessing irrigation facilities, while the size of holdings is greater in villages where these conditions are not obtainable. It will be seen that about 66 per cent. of the families hold land of size less than the average holding which is found to be 15.10 bighas. Families holding more than 30 bighas (19.24 per cent) hold land between 6 to 10 bighas. Families holding more than 30 bighas of land constitute only 10.18 per cent of the total. If we call these holdings as large, and distinguish them from medium holdings (11-30 bighas) and small holdings (10 bighas or less), the proportion of families holding land in the

three holding size groups are 10.18 per cent, 40.90 per cent, and 48.92 per cent, respectively. These figures compare favourably with those of the Darrang Sample which were 12.3 per cent, 44.1 per cent and 43.6 per cent respectively.

As to the area covered by the three holding groups it is observed that the large holdings cover 37.63 per cent of the village land, medium holdings cover 48.48 per cent and small holdings cover 13.87 per cent. Thus 48.92 per cent of the families holding land own only 13.87 per cent of the total area held in the sample with the result that their individual holdings are small, measuring between 1 and 10 bighas only. The average holding size in the group is only 4.28 bighas as compared with 17.90 bighas and 55.85 bighas of the medium and large holding groups. The model holding group in the whole sample comprises of sizes from 5 to 15 bighas which represent the conditions of agricultural holding prevailing in about 41 per cent of the rural families.

TABLE XXII

## Frequency Distribution of holdings Classified by Village Groups—Sibsagar Sample

Size of holding (in bighas)	ASSAMESE VILLAGES		AHOM VILLAGES		MIRI VILLAGES		EX-TEA LABOUR VILLAGES	
	No. of families	Percentage to total No. of families	No. of families	Percentage to total No. of families	No. of families	Percentage to total No. of families	No. of families	Percentage to total No. of families
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Less than 0.5 bigha.	132	8.25	73	11.09	25	34.24	102	29.06
1-3 ..	156	9.75	44	6.69	0	0	39	11.11
4-5 ..	153	9.56	36	5.47	2	2.74	26	7.41
6-10 ..	344	21.50	137	20.82	4	5.48	39	11.11
Total—(0-10) ..	785	49.06	290	44.07	31	42.46	206	58.69
11-15 ..	289	18.06	132	20.06	1	1.37	34	9.69
16-20 ..	183	11.44	85	12.92	8	10.96	31	8.83
21-25 ..	125	7.81	49	7.45	2	2.74	26	7.41
26-30 ..	78	4.88	39	5.93	1	1.37	14	3.99
Total—(11-30)	675	42.19	305	46.36	12	16.44	105	29.92
31-50 ..	103	6.44	51	7.75	6	8.22	27	7.69
51-100 ..	33	2.06	11	1.67	17	23.29	10	2.85
100 and above ..	4	0.25	1	0.15	7	9.59	3	0.85
Total—(31-100 and above) ..	140	8.75	63	9.57	30	41.10	40	11.39
Grand Total ..	1,600	100.00	658	100.00	73	100.00	351	100.00

TABLE XXIV

## Percentage of families &amp; average size of holdings in different holding groups classified by Village Groups—Sibsagar Sample

Holding Groups	ASSAMESE VILLAGES		AHOM VILLAGES		MIRI VILLAGES		EX-TEA LABOUR VILLAGES		ALL GROUP	
	Percentage of Families	Average size of holding (in bighas)	Percentage of Families	Average size of holding (in bighas)	Percentage of Families	Average size of holding (in bighas)	Percentage of Families	Average size of holding (in bighas)	Percentage of Families	Average size of holding (in bighas)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Small (0-10 bighas) ..	49.06	4.76	44.07	4.53	42.46	1.42	58.69	2.49	48.92	4.28
Medium (11-30 bighas)	42.19	17.70	46.36	17.95	16.44	19.30	29.92	18.89	40.90	17.90
Large (above 30 bighas)	8.75	54.94	9.57	44.92	41.10	75.33	11.39	61.63	10.18	55.85
Total ..	100.00	14.61	100.00	14.64	100.00	34.73	100.00	14.13	100.00	15.10

As in Darrang, here also the Assamese villages have the highest percentage (49.06 per cent) of land holders with small holdings measuring 10 bighas or less. The position is similar also in the case of the Miri and the Ex-Tea Labour villages, the corresponding percentage of small

land holders in them being 42.46 and 58.69 respectively. On the other hand the Ahom villages have the highest percentage of holders (46.36 per cent) in medium holding group ranging from 11 to 30 bighas. The percentage of families having large holding (above 30 bighas)

is comparatively low in all cases except in the Miri villages where it is as high as 41.1 per cent which is almost equal to the percentage in the small holding group (42.46 per cent). As regards the average size of holdings in different village groups it is seen that in the small holding group it varies from 1.42 bighas in the Miri villages to 4.76 bighas in the Assamese villages. In the medium holding group the average size of holding is almost the same, varying between 17.70 to 19.30 bighas in the different village groups. In the large holdings group the variation in the average size of holdings is rather large, ranging from 44.92 bighas in the Ahom villages to 75.33 bighas in the Miri villages while the Assamese and Ex-Tea Labour villages have intermediate size of the average holding. It may be noted also that the pattern of holding structure is almost similar in the Assamese and Ex-Tea Labour villages.

As the economic significance of the ownership of the holding of any size depends to a large extent in the occupation of the holder an analysis is made in the following table on the distribution of holdings according to the occupation of the families :—

TABLE XXV

No. of families of different occupational type holding land of various sizes—Sibsagar Sample

Size of holdings (in bighas).	NUMBER OF FAMILIES				
	Wholly Agri-cultural.	Agri-culture main occupation.	Agri-culture Sub-sidiary occupation.	Independent of Agri-culture.	All Occupations.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Less than 0.5 bigha ..	100	63	43	126	332
1-3 ..	79	53	39	68	239
4-5 ..	108	63	33	13	217
6-10 ..	341	115	44	24	524
11-15 ..	310	100	26	20	456
16-20 ..	222	58	14	13	307
21-25 ..	150	42	7	3	202
26-30 ..	98	27	4	3	132
31-50 ..	135	37	11	4	187
51-100 ..	57	11	0	3	71
Above 100 ..	10	3	2	0	15
Total ..	1,610	572	223	277	2,682

The number of families with non-agricultural occupations is the highest in the 0—0.5 bigha holding group and this number has a tendency to decline with the increase in the size of the

holding. Somewhat similar tendency is observed also amongst families who pursue agriculture as a subsidiary occupation. Thus 159 out of 223 families (roughly 72 per cent) belonging to this occupational type have holdings between 0—10 bighas which are quite inadequate by any reasonable standard to provide maintenance to an average family. Notwithstanding as many as 922 families in the sample (34 per cent) with holdings in 0—10 bigha group have to stick wholly or mainly to agriculture in the absence of alternative occupations. All these facts point to the essentially agricultural character of the economy.

The entire area in a holding is not necessarily fit for cultivation. If allowance is made for non-cultivable land in individual holdings the resulting distribution of holdings of cultivable land stands as follows :—

TABLE XXVI

Distribution of cultivable holding (in the different village groups—Sibsagar Sample

Cultivable holding (in bighas)	ALL VILLAGES	
	No. of families	Percentage
Less than 0.5 bigha.	460	17.15
1-3 ..	284	10.59
4-5 ..	256	9.55
6-10 ..	635	23.68
11-15 ..	384	14.32
16-20 ..	272	10.14
21-25 ..	146	5.44
26-30 ..	87	3.24
31-50 ..	112	4.18
51-100 ..	40	1.49
Above 100 ..	6	0.22
Total	2,682	100.00

Thus considered by the amount of cultivable holding the number of landless families in the sample is 460 which is 17.15 per cent of the total. As already seen from Table XXI, 302 families are without any land even for homestead purposes. (The proportion of landless families in the various village groups lies between 13.56 per cent (in Assamese villages) to 34.25 per cent (in Miri villages). Also about 61 per cent of the families in the whole sample have cultivable holdings of size up to 10 bighas only).

### Fragmentation

It has been seen that a large majority of the rural families have small holdings. This

is one of the greatest impediments to agricultural developments since the smallness of the agricultural holding does not enable the agriculturist to make full use of even his meagre capital resources. The non-availability of cultivable land in adequate quantity to keep pace with the increasing population pressure, the operation of the laws of inheritance, the growth of the spirit of individualism and dissolution of the joint family system, the decline of the handicrafts and cottage industries—all these factors have been contributive in progressively diminishing the holding size with the advance of time. To this drawback of small holding has been added the evil of fragmentation.

The statistics collected during the survey show that holdings are not in compact blocks but are scattered in fragments throughout the village separated by lands in the possession of others. Nay, some of these fragments lie even in separate villages. It has been found that there are 1,263 families in the sample holding land outside their village.

The two following tables will enable to gauge the extent of fragmentation in the sample. The tables are based on 2,380 returns from families who have holdings of various sizes:—

TABLE XXVII

**Distribution of holdings according to number of fragments—Sibsagar Sample**

No. of fragments (1)	No. of holdings (2)	Percentage (3)
1	300	12.61
2	463	19.45
3	394	16.56
4	324	13.61
5	274	11.51
6	177	7.44
7	135	5.67
8	84	3.53
9	55	2.31
10	50	2.10
11 to 15	95	3.99
16 to 20	19	0.80
above 20	10	0.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,380</b>	<b>100.00</b>

TABLE XXVIII

**Distribution of fragments according to size—Sibsagar Sample**

Size of fragments (in bighas). (1)	No. of fragments. (2)	Percentage (3)
Less than 0.5 bigha	2,336	22.16
1 to 2	2,839	26.93
2 to 5	3,044	28.87
5 to 10	1,548	14.68
10 to 15	486	4.61
15 to 20	133	1.26
20 to 30	110	1.05
30 to 50	32	0.31
above 50	14	0.13
<b>All sizes</b>	<b>10,542</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The total number of fragments in the 2,380 holdings is 10,542 which gives an average of 4.4 fragments per holding. An almost equal number (4.5) was revealed in the Darrang Sample. From Table XXVII it is seen that 300 holdings constituting 12.6 per cent of the total area in compact blocks, while about 37.8 per cent of the holdings have 5 fragments or more. Table XXVIII shows that about half the fragments measure below 2 bighas.

To show the extent of fragmentation in different sizes of holdings the various sizes have been divided into three groups viz., small, medium and large holdings group as before. The following table shows the extent of fragmentation in holding of different sizes.

TABLE XXIX

**Average number of fragments in holdings of various sizes—Sibsagar Sample**

Holding group	Size of holdings (in bighas)	No. of holdings	No. of fragments	No. of fragments per holding
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Small (upto 10 bighas)	Less than 0.5 bigha	30	31	1.03
	1-3	239	374	1.56
	4-5	217	613	2.82
	6-10	524	1,967	3.75
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>2,985</b>	<b>2.95</b>
Medium (11-30 bighas)	11-15	456	2,032	4.46
	16-20	307	1,416	4.61
	21-25	202	1,189	5.85
	26-30	132	854	6.47
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>5,491</b>	<b>5.00</b>
Large (above 30 bighas)	31-50	187	1,322	7.07
	51-100	71	572	8.06
	Above 100	15	172	11.47
	<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>2,066</b>	<b>7.57</b>
<b>All holdings</b>		<b>2,380</b>	<b>10,542</b>	<b>4.42</b>

In small holding group (upto 10 bighas) the average number of fragments per holding is 2.95 and this with an average size of 5.7 bighas in this group of holdings gives the average size of a fragment as 1.9 bighas. Several instances have been observed however where holdings of 6—10 bighas are fragmented up to 20 or more separate plots with the result that fragments in such cases are as small as 0.4 bigha or even less. In the average group of medium holdings (11—30 bighas) the average size of holding was seen to be 17.9 bighas while the average number of fragments is 5.0—thus giving the average size of a fragment in this group as 3.6 bighas. In large size holdings (above 30 bighas) the average number of fragments per holding is 7.57 and this with the average holding area of 55.85 bighas makes the average fragment size equal to 7.4 bighas. These figures may be compared with the average fragment sizes revealed in the Darrang Sample which were 1.5 bighas, 3.3 bighas and 7.1 bighas for small, medium and large holding groups respectively.

From Table XXIX it is seen that as the size of the holding increases, the average number of fragments also increases but the increase is not to the extent required for counteracting the effect of large area in the bigger sized holdings. Thus the average size of the fragment also increases with the increase in the size of the average holding in the different groups.

### Farms

Any picture of the agricultural set up in the rural areas of this State is in large measure a picture of family farming, for the great majority of the State's farmers are members of families living and operating in a common farm and sharing a common income. By whatever standard we judge these farms—general dimension, number of workers, capital invested, other value of the gross output—a large majority of them can at best be classified under the category of small family farms, wherein the triple functions of entrepreneur, capitalist and manual worker are discharged through the joint efforts of the family unit. Indeed in very few farms one finds permanent retention of farm servants or labour, while employment of casual hired labour is in some cases resorted to only during the busy seasons of agriculture.

In this enquiry a farm has been defined as comprised of all agricultural land operated by a single family with or without employment of labour. The family may or may not have the right of permanent occupancy and inheritance over the land operated in the farm, and in this sense the farm is distinguished from holding which comprises such land only as over which the family concerned possesses rights of occupancy and inheritance.

The total number of farms in the sample is 2,371 and the total area covered by them is 33,114.84 bighas. These are different from the corresponding figures in the case of holding which, as we have already seen, are 2,682 and 40,503.23 bighas for the total number and area covered respectively. The difference may be attributed to several reasons. In the first place there are quite a number of land holders—big and small—who do not cultivate their holding and thus have no farms of their own. Our survey revealed that 192 families out of a total of 2,682 covered by the sample belong to this category. Some of the families, usually the big land holders, maintain themselves entirely on rent receipts from their holdings. While a large proportion among them, besides, renting out their land also pursue some independent occupations. It has been found that the majority of the non-cultivating families are owners of small un-economic holdings of size less than 15 bighas and the insufficiency of their land induces them to take up non-agricultural occupations. A reference to table XXV shows that out of 788 families holding 5 bighas or less as many as 207 (26.3 per cent) land holders are independent of agriculture, who are not farmers of their owned land. Again, there are some right holders who cultivate only part of their holding by themselves and rent out the rest. Now the village land which is not cultivated by these wholly or partly non-cultivating land holders is rented out to tenants some of whom belong to the village itself while others are outsiders. The rented land accountable to outside tenants has not been shown in the total farm area available in the sample. In the second place the holding of majority of families are not cultivated in their entirety, either because part of the holding being unfit for cultivation purposes or being used for raising dwelling houses or for growing garden crops.

The average size of the farm is 14.0 bighas which again is less than the corresponding figure for holding which was seen to be 15.1 bighas. The average size of the farm is however hardly an adequate measure for judging the conditions of the farms in the region. The distribution on the other hand gives a more comprehensive picture of the condition and this is shown in the following table.

TABLE XXXII  
Distribution of farms according to  
size—Sibsagar Sample

Size of farm (bighas)	No. of farms	Per-centage	Cumulative per-centage	Total area covered (bighas)	Per-centage	Cumulative per-centage
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Less than 0.5 bigha.	2	0.08	0.08	0.60	..	..
1-3 ..	154	6.50	6.58	337.76	1.02	1.02
4-5 ..	207	8.73	15.31	938.20	2.83	3.85
6-10	709	29.90	45.21	5,737.52	17.33	21.18
Total—Small Farms.	1,072	45.21	..	7,014.08	21.18	..
11-15	556	23.45	68.66	7,134.77	21.54	42.72
16-20	359	15.14	83.80	6,377.42	19.26	61.98
21-25	163	6.83	90.63	3,726.74	11.25	73.23
26-30	88	3.72	94.35	2,502.05	7.56	80.79
Total—Medium Farms.	1,166	49.14	..	19,740.98	59.61	..
31-50	106	4.47	98.82	4,047.47	12.22	93.01
51-100	23	1.01	99.83	1,393.91	4.21	97.22
Above 100 ..	4	0.17	100.00	918.40	2.78	100.00
Total—Big Farms	133	5.65	..	6,359.78	19.21	..
Total—All Farms	2,317	100.00	..	33,114.84	100.00	..

It will be seen from a study of the above distribution that a large proportion of cultivators (45.21 per cent) operates small size farms of 10 bighas or less and the total farm area operated by these cultivators constitutes only 21.18 per cent of the whole farm area in the sample. On the other hand only a relatively small proportion (5.65 per cent) of the cultivators are operators of large farms above 30 bighas but they possess among themselves a big

slice of the available farm land forming 19.21 per cent of the total. The largest proportion of families (49.14 per cent) however occur in the middle-size farms between 11—30 bighas.

It will also be seen that about two-thirds of the families have farms of size below the average size of farm in the sample. Turning next to the average farm-size in the small, medium and large groups we find that in the small farm group of size less than 10 bighas the average size is 6.54 bighas, in the medium farm group ranging from 11—30 bighas it is 17.0 bighas and finally in the large farm group of above 30 bighas the same is 47.82 bighas. These figures may be compared with the corresponding figures for average holding-size which as we have seen are 4.28 bighas, 17.90 bighas and 55.85 bighas respectively. The higher average size in the small size group of farms is due to the general tendency among the small agriculturists of renting some lands from others in order to expand their cultivated area.

TABLE XXXIII  
Distribution of farms according to Size  
and Ownership—Sibsagar Sample

Size of farm (in bighas)	NUMBER OF FARMS			Total
	Wholly owned	Wholly rented	Partly owned and partly rented	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
3 bighas or less	83	65	8	156
4-5 ..	114	53	40	207
6-10 ..	351	108	250	709
Total—Small farms.	548	226	298	1,072
Percentage ..	51.12%	21.08%	27.80%	100%
11-15 ..	259	44	253	556
16-20 ..	189	16	154	359
21-25 ..	89	8	65	162
26-30 ..	42	2	44	88
Total—Medium farms.	579	70	516	1,165
Percentage ..	49.70%	6.00%	44.30%	100%
31-50 ..	58	4	44	106
51-100 ..	11	1	12	24
Above 100 ..	2	0	2	4
Total—Large farms.	71	5	58	134
Percentage ..	52.99%	3.73%	43.28%	100%
Total—Farms.	1,198	301	872	2,371
Percentage to total No. of farms in the Sample. ..	50.53%	12.69%	36.78%	100%

TABLE XXXIV

## Distribution of farm area by size and type of ownership—Sibsagar Sample

Size of farm (bighas)	AREA IN BIGHAS							Total (7)-(8)
	Wholly owned	Wholly rented	PARTLY OWNED AND PARTLY RENTED			Total owned area (2)+(4)	Total owned area (3)+(5)	
			Owned area	Rented area	Total			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3 bighas or less	177.86	138.70	10.95	10.85	21.80	188.81	149.55	338.36
4-5 ..	526.59	229.10	98.48	84.03	182.51	625.07	313.13	938.20
6-10 ..	2,819.44	851.28	1,081.69	985.11	2,066.80	3,901.13	1,836.39	5,737.52
Total—Small	3,523.89	1,219.08	1,191.12	1,079.99	2,271.11	4,715.01	2,299.07	7,014.08
Percentage ..	50.24%	17.38%	16.98%	15.40%	32.38%	67.22%	22.78%	100%
11-15 ..	3,310.80	544.92	1,773.81	1,505.24	3,279.05	5,084.61	2,050.16	7,134.77
16-20 ..	3,330.35	285.20	1,589.14	1,172.73	2,761.87	4,929.49	1,457.93	6,377.42
21-25 ..	2,061.23	185.08	795.44	684.79	1,480.43	2,856.67	870.07	3,726.74
26-30 ..	1,174.26	60.00	741.49	526.30	1,267.79	1,915.75	586.30	2,502.05
Total—Medium	9,876.64	1,075.20	4,899.88	3,889.26	8,789.14	14,776.52	4,964.46	19,740.98
Percentage ..	50.03%	5.45%	24.82%	19.70%	44.52%	74.85%	25.15%	100%
31-50 ..	2,299.56	134.00	874.24	739.67	1,613.91	3,173.80	873.67	4,047.47
51-100 ..	656.64	59.40	394.40	283.47	677.87	1,051.04	342.87	1,393.91
Above 100 ..	666.00	..	31.00	221.40	252.40	697.00	221.40	918.40
Total—Large	3,622.20	193.40	1,299.64	1,244.54	2,544.18	4,921.84	1,437.94	6,359.78
Percentage ..	56.95%	3.04%	20.44%	19.57%	40.01%	77.39%	22.61%	100%
Total—All farms	17,022.73	2,487.68	7,390.64	6,213.79	13,604.43	24,413.37	8,701.47	33,114.84
Percentage ..	51.41%	7.51%	22.32%	18.76%	41.08%	73.73%	26.27%	100%

It will be seen that in all size groups—small, medium and large—about half the number of farms are wholly owned and the area covered by these farms also constitutes about half the farm area available in the respective size groups. Owned area under all farms is 24,413.4 bighas which forms about 74 per cent of the area of all farms. Nearly 70 per cent of this owned area is covered by wholly owned farms and the rest by the partly owned farms. Thus the area available for subletting is only 26 per cent of the total farm area and amounts to 8,701.5 bighas. About 29 per cent of the total rented area is covered by the wholly rented farms and the remaining 71 per cent. by the partly owned farms. While there is no marked relationship between the size of farms and the amount of rented area in partly rented farms there is a tendency for medium and fairly large sized farms to show a higher proportion of rented area. This is attributable to the fact already pointed out viz., that there is a general tendency of renting some land to enlarge the cultivated area among the small agriculturists.

This tendency to preserve farms at fairly large sizes is however not always met with success.

Because of the lack of scope for alternative non-agricultural employment the majority of the land holders, including even the small holders of land, are compelled to lean upon farming of whatever land they own and however unremunerative it may be. The result is that the supply of land for renting purposes is far too limited. This is in fact the main reason for the absence of sufficient number of farms comprised entirely of rented land in the fairly large size groups (20 bighas and above). Again in the partly owned and partly rented farms the proportion of owned land tends to diminish because of sub-division of holdings and alienation due to pressure from creditors either of which is seen to occur frequently in the rural areas. The land thus passing out of the hands of the farmers is not always available for renting in order to preserve the size of the farm. All these factors combine to make the size of farm in the partly-owned and partly rented and wholly rented groups less stable as compared to that of the wholly or predominantly owned groups. The number of farms in the latter categories in our sample is 1,420 (about 60 per cent) and they own at least 75 per cent of their farm land.



## APPENDIX 7

# SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES

### 1. Instructions for the Census of Small Industries :

At the instance of Registrar General, many Provincial Governments agreed to conduct a census of small-scale industries which was to precede the main population census. In Assam, however, nothing much was done as a result of which I took the opportunity of combining the census of small-scale industries with the population census. The following instructions were issued for the census which are reproduced below so that the discussions on statistics may be easily understood :—

“ In this enquiry we want to find out something about small industries such as Cottage and Home Industries, small workshops, etc. where articles are produced, repaired or otherwise treated for sale, use or for disposal, and small mines. The enquiry will be confined to cases where people are regularly associated together for such work.

(1) We want to know the number of looms in use and what they are used for. Even when there is only one loom in a house fill in the form about it. Give particular attention while collecting data for handlooms. In the case of handlooms even if there is one handloom in a house and it is worked by only one person, you should fill up a separate slip for it. You will have to collect the number of handlooms with fly shuttle separately against question 6. Thus 8(1)

Cotton; 6 (2) Silk on a slip will indicate that out of the total number, there are 3 handlooms with fly shuttles.

(2) You need NOT therefore concern yourself with the following :

(a) Men who work on their own and do not employ other people (unless they are using looms in which case act according to paragraph 2).

(b) If 20 or more people are employed.

(c) If they use engine power and employ 10 or more people.

(d) If they already send in regular returns to the Provincial Government under the Factory Act or the Mines Act.

If you have any doubt whether a certain place should be counted or not ask the Tehsildar or Revenue Officer.

(3) If there are two or more distinct activities in the same house and different persons are employed for each, use a separate form for each activity.

(4) For each industry, etc., you think should be reported, use one form. See the specimen at the end of the Handbook. Printed slips bound in Pads of fifty will be supplied to you. Always have the booklet with you and thus you can read the question from it and write the answer against the proper number on your slip.

(5) Your district, thana and village have a permanent code number. Enter this at the

top of every slip and add the number of the house where you find an industry going on. If it is a mine, etc., which does not have a house number put down the survey number of the field or other simple indentifying detail.

**Question No: 1**

(Name of the Establishment or proprietor)

Where the establishment has a distinct and recognised name write the name of the establishment. Otherwise write the name of the proprietor.

**Question No: 2**

(Nature of the business)

Describe the business clearly so that it can be easily identified and classified, *e.g.*, cycle repairing, cotton ginning, coir mat making, etc. If the same persons are employed in more than one activity give all the activities, *e.g.*, furniture making and repairing, etc.

**Question No: 3**

(Number of owners)

If the activity is owned jointly by more than one person, give the number.

**Question No: 4**

(Do all the owners belong to same family or are there any outsiders).

If the owners belong to the same family write 1; if there are outsiders write 2. If there are both family and non-family owners add the numbers of outsiders.

**Question No: 5**

(Is the establishment perennial or seasonal? If seasonal for which months in the year does it work?)

If an activity is pursued for nine months or more in every year treat it as perennial and put it as such. If it only goes on for less than nine months in the year write the months during which the establishment works. For purposes of simplicity adopt the English months January to December. If this is adopted do not write the name of the month in full but only write the number of the month as 1, 2, etc., for January, February, respectively. If you are not conversant with the English months write the names of the months in full according to your almanac in your language.

**Question No: 6**

(Number of looms in textile establishments and material woven, *e.g.*, cotton, wool, silk, etc.)

Write the number of looms and the No. of handlooms with fly shuttles within brackets and the material woven, *e.g.*, 6(1) cotton. If more than one material are woven in the same place write the number of each separately, *e.g.* 6 (1) cotton 5 (2) silk, etc.

**Question No: 7**

(Number of persons employed)

Age here means completed years. Employed include owners as well as members of family working in the establishment.

Table A given below summarises the results of the textile and the non-textile establishments as well as the number of handlooms in the textile establishments with or without fly shuttle.

TABLE A

## Small Industries in Assam, Manipur and Tripura

State, Natural Division and District	Total No. of establishments	No. of non-textile establishments	No. of textile establishments	No. OF HAND-LOOMS IN TEXTILE ESTABLISHMENTS	
				Without Fly-Shuttle	With Fly- Shuttle
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
ASSAM STATE ..	405,702	13,571	392,131	448,500	27,244
Assam Plains Divisions ..	350,637	11,497	339,140	373,717	37,103
(1) Cachar ..	15,153	1,754	13,399	15,716	1,457
(2) Goalpara ..	43,778	1,857	41,921	42,672	4,293
(3) Kāmrup ..	124,848	2,176	122,672	133,496	17,213
(4) Darrang ..	35,493	1,124	34,369	35,164	1,479
(5) Nowgong ..	35,827	1,008	34,819	41,087	2,843
(6) Sibsagar ..	69,650	2,980	66,670	76,709	3,082
(7) Lakhimpur ..	25,888	598	25,290	28,873	6,736
Assam Hills Division ..	55,065	2,074	52,891	74,850	141
(8) United K. and J. Hills ..	..	..	..	..	..
(9) Naga Hills ..	14,641	1,900	12,741	13,803	..
(10) Lushai Hills ..	28,901	..	28,901	45,887	13
(11) Garo Hills ..	3,674	76	3,598	6,060	25
(12) United Mikir and North Cachar Hills ..	5,608	..	5,608	6,032	..
(13) Mishmi Hills ..	1,197	24	1,173	1,670	103
(14) Abor Hills ..	481	1	480	765	..
(15) Tirap Frontier Tract ..	..	..	..	..	..
(16) Balipara Frontier Tract ..	563	73	490	633	..
(17) Naga Tribal Area ..	..	..	..	..	..
MANIPUR STATE ..	34,535	608	33,927	36,430	3,149
TRIPURA STATE ..	29,649	597	29,052	30,097	4,271

My difficulties and doubts in regard to some of these figures are mentioned in the following extract from a note which I sent to the Deputy Director, I/C. Cottage Industries in Assam. He was requested to examine the figures along with whatever data on handlooms available in his Department and to let me know whether these figures can be accepted as accurate and reliable.

"I attempted to combine a census of small industries with the main population census but have some doubt whether the enumerators paid as much attention to this extra burden as they should have. The figures are there but I have full authority from the Registrar General to discard those of any district as unreliable if there are good reasons for doing so. I shall, therefore, be obliged if you kindly have the figures scrutinised and let me have your opinion.

The figures analysed by districts reveal as follows:—The figures for handlooms with fly-shuttle have registered an increase in every district except in case of K. & J. Hills which show

639 fly-shuttle looms in 1921. The figure for the present Census of 1951 is 0. In fact United K. & J. Hills reports no loom of any kind and no textile or non-textile establishment. This is perhaps due to the non-holding of the census in this district rather than the entire absence of any such industry as alleged. The figures of handlooms without fly-shuttle have declined in case of Garo Hills, Lakhimpur and Darrang, while there is an extremely noticeable decrease in case of Naga Hills. On the other hand Lushai Hills which reported only 225 looms without fly-shuttle now gives the tremendous figure of 45,887.

I see no apparent reasons for such wide discrepancies and shall be grateful for any light that you can throw on the matter district by district."

(Extract from U.O.No:Tab.11/23 dated Shillong, 15th March, 1952, from Superintendent, Census Operations, Assam, Manipur and Tripura to the Deputy Director I/C. Cottage Industries, Assam.)

The Deputy Director of Sericulture and Weaving explained that his Department did not so far maintain any reliable statistics on handlooms and textile establishments due to inadequacy of the staff. As such it was rather difficult for him to check the figures as recorded in Table A. He has supplied some approximate figures for the year 1951, which are given in the following Table A-1 for whatever they are worth:—

TABLE A-1

**Small-scale industries according to the Department of Sericulture and Weaving, Assam**

State, Natural Division and District	No. of Textile Establishments	NO. OF HANDLOOM IN TEXTILE ESTABLISHMENTS	
		Without Fly-Shuttle	With Fly-Shuttle
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>ASSAM STATE</b> ..	<b>450,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>45,037</b>
<i>Assam Plains Division</i>	360,000	400,000	44,300
(1) Cachar ..	14,000	16,000	7,500
(2) Goalpara ..	45,000	48,000	4,300
(3) Kamrup ..	125,000	134,000	17,500
(4) Darrang ..	40,000	44,000	1,500
(5) Nowgong ..	42,000	50,000	3,000
(6) Sibsagar ..	68,000	78,000	4,000
(7) Lakhimpur ..	26,000	30,000	6,500
<i>Assam Hills Division</i>	90,000	100,000	737
(8) United Khasi and Jaintia Hills	400	500	260
(9) Naga Hills ..	32,000	35,000	100
(10) Lushai Hills ..	42,000	46,000	30
(11) Garo Hills ..	5,200	6,700	100
(12) United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	6,000	6,500	100
(13) Mishmi Hills ..	1,600	2,000	100
(14) Abor Hills ..	1,200	1,500	15
(15) Tirap Frontier Tract	500	600	15
(16) Balipara Frontier Tract	600	700	12
(17) Naga Tribal Areas	500	500	5
<b>MANIPUR STATE</b> ..	<b>34,000</b>	<b>37,000</b>	<b>3,500</b>
<b>TRIPURA STATE</b> ..	<b>30,000</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>4,500</b>

The total number of textile establishments in Assam according to the small industry census is 392,000 whereas it is 450,000 according to the Deputy Director, I/C. Cottage Industries. The difference is particularly noticeable in the case

of Assam Hills Division where the number of textile establishments according to these two sets of figures is 53,000 and 90,000 respectively. The difference in the case of Assam Plains Division is a modest one of 20,000 only. The discrepancy between the two sets of figures is largely explained by figures of Nowgong and Darrang which have each 34,000 textile establishments according to the census but Nowgong is reported to have 42 and Darrang 40 thousand according to the Deputy Director, I/C. Cottage Industries. Similar wide discrepancy occurs in case of Lushai Hills for which the census and departmental figures are respectively 29 and 42 thousand; in the case of Naga Hills these are respectively 13,000 and 32,000. There is a closer similarity in these two different sets of figures in Manipur and Tripura.

The number of handlooms in Assam in textile establishments without fly-shuttle and with fly-shuttle is of the order of 449,000 and 37,000 according to the census as against 500,000 and 45,000 according to the departmental information. By far the largest discrepancy is discovered in the case of Naga Hills where the census and departmental figures are 14,000 and 35,000 respectively.

## 2. Distribution of textile establishments and handlooms districtwise :

Cols. 4, 5 and 6 of Table A give the requisite information. We find that Kamrup has by far the largest number of textile establishments (123,000), handlooms without fly-shuttle (133,000) and handlooms with fly-shuttle (17,000). Sibsagar with 66,000 textile establishments comes second while Cachar trails with 13,000. In the Hills Division Lushai Hills and Naga Hills are outstanding with 29,000 and 13,000 textile establishments respectively.

## 3. Employment in Textile Establishments :

Table B which follows analyses the employment position with their sex break-up. Figures for males are given separately for boys and men, and for girls and women. There is a discrepancy between the total of males and females combined, i.e., columns 4 plus 7 do not add up to col. 3, because the number of children, which were separately recorded are not included in cols. 4 and 7.

TABLE B

## Employment in Textile Establishments

State and Natural Division		Total No. of establishments	Total Number of Persons	Males			Females		
				Total	Boys	Men	Total	Girls	Women
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Assam	..	392,131	581,700	20,630	1,943	18,687	559,070	33,091	525,979
Assam Plains	..	339,140	491,812	14,562	1,884	12,678	476,250	29,992	446,258
Assam Hills	..	52,991	89,888	6,068	59	6,009	82,820	3,099	79,721
Manipur	..	33,927	44,259	1,024	69	955	43,235	2,250	40,985
Tripura	..	29,052	49,477	3,782	909	2,873	45,695	2,130	43,565

In the whole of Assam, as many as 582,000 men, women and children are employed in 392,000 textile establishments. In the State of Assam men including boys total only 21,000 as against the overwhelming proportion of women including girls 559,000. Practically an overwhelming majority both of the total number of establishments and numbers employed are naturally included under cotton spinning, sizing and weaving, i.e., group 2.62 of the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme. Under this group as many as 376,000 establishments and 554,000 numbers employed are included. Group 2.81—Jute pressing, baling, spinning and weaving comes next with 9,000 textile establishments and 14,000

numbers employed followed by group 2.83 silk reeling, spinning and weaving which has 4,000 establishments and about 8,000 numbers employed. Group 2.63 which includes cotton dyeing, bleaching, printing preparation and sponging includes a further 2,400 establishments with 4,400 numbers employed.

## 4. Employment in non-textile establishments :

According to the census, the total number of non-textile establishments in Assam is 13,571 out of which 11,497 are in the Plains and barely 2,074 in the Hills. Table C summarises available information on this subject.

TABLE C

## Employment in Non-Textile Establishments

State and Natural Division	Total No. of establish- ments	Total Number of Persons	Males			Females			
			Total	Boys	Men	Total	Girls	Women	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	
Assam	..	13,571	29,746	23,199	1,361	21,838	6,547	598	5,949
Assam Plains	..	11,497	26,363	20,348	1,281	19,067	6,015	561	5,454
Assam Hills	..	2,074	3,383	2,851	80	2,771	532	37	495
Manipur	..	608	1,314	1,269	108	1,161	45	1	44
Tripura	..	597	1,648	1,459	36	1,423	188	8	181

Total number of persons employed is as few as 29,746 in Assam out of which all but 3,383 in the Hills Division, are in the Plains Division. Here we notice a striking feature, viz., the predominance of males who total 23,199 against 6,547 females. This is in marked contrast to the position in the textile establishments which we have

just reviewed where we find a overwhelming preponderance of females. Table D below gives for the State as a whole employment figures of 8 important groups as classified under the Indian Census Economic Classification Scheme where we find sizeable numbers employed in the non-textile establishment.

TABLE D

**Employment in some important groups of Non-Textile Establishments in Assam**

Industry-Group Code No. and Name	Total No. of establishments	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
4.04 Workers in precious stones, precious metals and makers of jewellery and ornaments	2,362	4,641	3,946	695
4.64 Basket makers ..	2,281	3,842	3,090	752
4.41 Potters and makers of earthenwares ..	2,259	5,151	2,413	2,733
3.01 Blacksmiths and other workers in iron and makers of implements	1,633	3,663	3,213	450
1.62 Carpenters, turners and joiners ..	1,032	2,000	1,939	61
2.71 Tailors, milliners, dress makers and darners ..	748	1,329	1,176	153
4.50 Other industries of woody materials including leaves but not including furniture and fixtures	733	1,857	1,054	803
3.32 Manufacture, assembly, and repair of railway equipment, motor vehicles and bicycles	526	1,345	1,315	30

From the above table, it is clear that goldsmiths and other workers in precious stones, precious metals and makers of jewellery and ornaments form the largest group with 2,362 establishments in which 4,641 people worked. Group 4.64—basket makers is the second largest with 2,281 establishments and 3,842 numbers employed, followed by Group 4.41, which contains 2,259 establishments giving employment to 5,151 potters and makers of earthenware. Blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors follow in descending order according to the number of establishments.

**Accuracy of the Figures :**

The figures thrown up by the census of small-scale industries have not been printed in the main table volume of this Report either in Part II-A

or Part II-B. I have, however, considered it fit to include them in Part I-A of this Report. The reason is that while the accuracy in respect of the details actually recorded by the Enumerators during the Census of the Small-scale Industries has been reported to be good, the District Officers were of the view that there was a tendency towards under-enumeration of the establishments due to the failure of the enumerating staff to make intensive efforts to discover all establishments within the areas allotted to them. The figures in the tables for the Small-scale Industries should, therefore, be regarded as illustrative of the nature of small industries prevalent in the different parts of the district and should not be relied upon as giving accurate number of specific types of establishments in different localities.

# RELIGION

## 1. Classification of Population :

The old classification of population by religions followed up to 1931 Census was replaced in 1941 by a classification by communities. This change of classification affected the 1941 figures relating to the tribal communities to an extent which had made their comparison with previous censuses or with 1951 Census useless. Thus a Khasi returning himself as a Hindu, Christian, Muslim or tribal was classified under Khasi community irrespective of his religion. In 1951

Census the old classification by religions was adopted with the instruction to record the religion of every one as given by the person enumerated. Table A is based on D-II Religion.

## 2. Distribution of Population according to Religion :

Table A below gives the distribution of the population of Assam and its natural divisions as well as that of Manipur and Tripura according to the main religions.

TABLE A  
Distribution of Population according to Religion

State and Natural Division	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Tribal Religions	Total Population
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Assam	.. 5,894,733 (65.2%)	1,996,456 (22.1%)	585,399 (6.5%)	527,712 (5.8%)	9,043,707 (100.%)
Assam Plains	.. 5,617,474	1,980,504	147,024	37,727	7,805,558
Assam Hills	.. 277,259	15,952	438,375	480,985	1,238,149
Manipur	.. 347,325	37,197	68,394	124,485	577,635
Tripura	.. 480,662	136,940	5,262	690	639,029

\* I am grateful to my Head Assistant, Shri Ishwar Chandra Purkayastha, for preparing this small note on religion. According to Registrar General's instructions, the statistics on religion were not to be discussed in

this volume. This note has been included here for the sake of completeness, myself having added merely para. 2 above. (R.B.V.).



From Table A, we find that 65.2 per cent of the total population of Assam profess Hinduism in one form or another; 22.1 per cent are the followers of Islams while 6.5 per cent are Christians. Another 5.8 per cent of the population profess tribal religions; thus more than 99.5 per cent of the people are included under these four heads. All other religions combined include less than one-half of one per cent of the total population of the State. Among them are—

Other Religions	Numbers
Buddhists	22,675
Jains	4,285
Sikhs	4,107
Jews	209
Non-tribal	8,171

Among these persons who are included under non-tribal religions and who total 8,171, as many as 6,786 have declared their religion *Ahom*, 163 Meithei, whereas 285 persons are included under the heading "religion not specified". From the microscopic Parsi community in India, only 27 were censused in Assam as Zoroastrians, most of them are found in United K. & J. Hills district.

### 3. Hindus :

All the indigenous tribes of Assam and the non-indigenous tribes, such as, Chakmas, Mun-

das, Oraons, Gonds, Konds, Santhals, were included under tribes in 1941 whereas these tribes, especially Kacharis, Miris, Ravas, Lalungs and all tea-garden tribes, were mostly classified in the past and in 1951 on the religion basis as Hindus. The result of this change from a religion basis to a community basis of classification was reflected in numbers as well as in proportion of Hindus in the general population of undivided Assam (*e.g.*, 4,154 in 1941 against 5,628 in 1931 per 10,000 of population and variation percentage —12.8 in 1931-41 against +19.3 in 1921-31).

Similar effect will be noticed if the figures of Hindus of reconstituted Assam for 1941 and 1951 are compared. The total number of Hindus in 1951 is 5,894,733 (including 274,455 displaced persons) against 3,266,471 (adjusted) in 1941. Thus, this decade has registered a percentage increase of 82.7 (to which displaced persons have contributed 8.5%) with 6,513 per 10,000 of population, against the population increase of 19.1.

### 4. Tribal Population :

The figures relating to the tribal population will reveal similar abnormal variation. Hence comparative figures for Hindus and tribal population are not shown in Table B, given below, as they are likely to mislead the unwary readers.

TABLE B  
Comparison of Muslims and Christians for 1951 and 1941

State and Natural Division	Muslims		Percentage variation 1941-51	Christians		Percentage variation 1941-51	PER 10,000 OF TOTAL POPULATION				PER 10,000 TOTAL MINUS DISPLACED PERSONS	
							Muslims		Christians		Muslims 1951	Christians 1951
	1951	1941		1951	1941		1951	1941	1951	1941		
Assam ..	1,996,456	1,697,509	+17.6	585,399	356,000	+64.4	2,203	2,236	647	469	2,277	668
Plains Division ..	1,980,804	1,681,467	+17.8	147,024	116,500	+26.2	2,537	2,590	189	179	2,625	195
Hills Division ..	15,952	16,042	— 0.6	438,375	239,500	+83.0	129	146	3,541	2,175	130	3,583
Manipur ..	37,197	29,562	+25.8	68,394	25,732	+165.8	644	577	1,184	503	645	1,186
Tripura ..	136,940	123,570	+10.8	5,262	317	1,559.9	2,143	2,409	82	6	2,546	98

N.B.—1941 figures for Nowgong and Sibsagar includes Mikir Hills.

### 5. Christians :

The number of Christians in 1941 as shown

in Table B has been worked out for re-constituted Assam from an estimate 'prepared in 1941 on the basis of the 1931 figures,

of natural increase in areas where the Christians are chiefly found and the extent of missionary activity as far as is known or can be gathered. It was also remarked by Marar in 1941 that "Christians are most numerous among the tribal people of the Hills where there is nothing to suppose that the spread of Christianity has not kept the same pace as in the previous decade. It is, however, reported from Lushai Hills that there has been a tendency in the opposite direction also, Christians reverting to their old beliefs and sacrifices, this has been indicated in the houselists, but has not been examined to ascertain its extent." The present decade has registered an increase of 64.4% in Assam and 83.0% in the Hills Division which indicates that, even if there is any reaction, it has not affected the missionary activity to any noticeable extent. The percentage of increase

in the number of Christians in the Lushai Hills district is 83.1% against the total population increase of 28.4 during the decade.

#### 6. Muslims :

The decrease of 0.53% in the Hills Division is mainly due to the opting of Muslim Government servants from Shillong, the capital of the Province, to Pakistan. The number of Muslims in the urban and rural areas of K. & J. Hills are 2,418 and 750 in 1951 against 3,026 and 629 in 1941. respectively. Here the reader may also refer to Subsidiary Tables 1.10A and 1.10B showing the growth of the population of Goalpara and Kamrup, which throw valuable light on the decrease of Muslim population in certain tracts of these two districts which were affected by communal disturbances of February—March, 1950.

## APPENDIX 9

# LANGUAGE

### Mother-tongue

In 1931 Mullan, the then Census Superintendent remarked that "Assam, a small province with a population of nine and a quarter million people, should be a philologist's paradise for it is a veritable Babel, as will be seen from the statistics of language." Main Table D-I(i) printed in Part II-A of the 1951 Census Report shows the number of speakers of each mother-tongue and Table D-I(ii), the number of persons who are bilingual.

2. The instructions to enumerators were "Enter each person's mother-tongue, *i.e.*, the language first spoken from the cradle, against Question No. 7. In the case of infants and deaf-mutes, the language of the mother should be entered. If any person speaks any Indian (not foreign) language, other than his mother-tongue, in his daily or domestic life, record it against Question No. 8 (Bilingualism). Record only one subsidiary language."

3. **Classification :** In the 1951 Census, 120 languages were recorded as mother-tongue in Assam. Some of them are new language-names

\* As desired by the Registrar General, discussion of the statistics of language was not to form a part of this volume. For the sake of completeness, however, I have included this brief note on language as an appendix which was kindly contributed by Shri S. C. Sarma, M.Sc.(Cal.), M.A.(Columbia), Director of Statistics, Assam and ex-officio Superintendent, Census Operations, Assam, Manipur and Tripura. I have merely added para. 5 to explain the data (R.B.V.).

(e.g., Jaintia in United K. & J. Hills, Hairamba in Cachar) which are not mentioned in the previous Census Reports or in the Index of Language names by Sir George A. Grierson. According to the instructions of the Registrar General, no attempt was made to effect a classification of the actual returns. There is no need to go into the distinction between languages and dialects; where the citizen has taken the trouble to give a distinctive name it is a distinctive "mother-tongue" so far as the Census is concerned. Hence the language names as actually returned have been shown in the Table. A reference to the District Officers in some doubtful cases brought the following replies :—

With regard to 6 males and 5 females who returned their mother-tongue as Sanskrit in the rural areas of Gauhati Thana, the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup wrote "without the name and address of the persons it will not be possible to ascertain their mother-tongue. Generally Sanskrit is not the mother-tongue, as it is not a spoken language." Apparently these are 'prestige' entries.

4. The statement below shows the number of speakers of the important languages per 10,000 of population in 1951 and 1931, no language statistics being compiled in 1941. In order to make the 1951 figures comparable to those of 1931, the number of displaced persons from East Pakistan (*viz.*, 272,080 in Assam, 1,009 in

Manipur and 100,817 in Tripura) who generally speak Bengali have been deducted from the numbers of Bengali speakers in 1951, whereas for the truncated portion of Karimganj Sub-division tagged on to the Cachar district proportionate figures on the basis of population have been added to the 1931 figures.

TABLE A

## Distribution according to language in Assam

Name of mother-tongue	Number of speakers		No. per 10,000 of total population speaking	
	1951	1931	1951	1931
Hindi ..	335,688	483,905	382	763
Bengali ..	1,447,075	1,699,456	1,650	2,679
Assamese ..	4,972,493	1,993,106	5,669	3,142
Abor ..	2,167	13,874	2	22
Miri ..	57,623	80,831	66	127
Boro-Bodo-Group	456,140	529,314	520	834
Mikir ..	130,581	126,152	149	199
Naga Group ..	209,954	188,050	239	296
Kiki-Chin-Group	209,553	202,876	239	320
Khasi ..	292,923	231,690	334	365
Manipuri ..	89,433	89,066	102	140
Tripura ..	..	..	..	..
Others ..	567,997	706,136	648	1,113
Total ..	8,771,627	6,344,456	10,000	10,000

TABLE B

## Distribution according to language in Manipur

Name of mother-tongue	Number of speakers		No. per 10,000 total population speaking	
	1951	1931	1951	1931
Hindi ..	950	1,049	16	24
Bengali ..	1,850	2,273	32	51
Assamese ..	245	125	4	3
Abor ..	..	..	..	..
Miri ..	..	..	..	..
Boro-Bodo-Group	..	..	..	..
Mikir ..	..	..	..	..
Naga Group ..	95,528	76,537	1,657	1,717
Kuki-Chin-Group	80,545	82,512	1,397	1,852
Khasi ..	..	..	..	..
Manipuri ..	377,191	279,181	6,542	6,265
Tripura ..	..	..	..	..
Others ..	20,317	3,929	352	88
Total ..	576,626	445,606	10,000	10,000

TABLE C

## Distribution according to language in Tripura

No. of mother-tongue	Number of speakers		No. per 10,000 total population speaking	
	1951	1931	1951	1931
Hindi ..	37,972	12,798	705	335
Bengali ..	273,441	165,530	5,081	4,328
Assamese ..	263	467	5	12
Abor ..	..	..	..	..
Miri ..	..	..	..	..
Boro-Bodo-Group	3,543	3,756	66	98
Mikir ..	..	..	..	..
Naga Group ..	..	..	..	..
Kuki-Chin-Group	30,641	3,470	569	91
Khasi ..	..	..	..	..
Manipuri ..	19,086	19,536	355	511
Tripura ..	129,379	148,298	2,404	3,877
Others ..	43,887	28,595	815	748
Total ..	538,212	382,450	10,000	10,000*

5. From Table A we find that nearly 57 per cent of the people of Assam (excluding displaced persons altogether from such consideration on a percentage basis) speak Assamese while over 16 per cent speak Bengali. Thus Assamese and Bengali are the two main languages of the people in Assam; together they account for very nearly three fourths of the entire population of the State. 5 per cent of the people speak languages of the Boro-Bodo-Group. 2.4 per cent speak any one of the numerous Naga languages whereas a similar percentage, viz., 2.4 speak those of Kuki-Chin-Group. Only 1.5 per cent of the people speak the Mikir language. More important than any of these minor groups is the Khasi language spoken by more than 3.3 per cent of the people of the State. Languages other than those specifically mentioned in Table A have been lumped together; together they account for about 6.5 per cent of the population.

A comparison with the percentage of population speaking these different languages in 1931, for which alone figures are available, reveals an interesting tale. There was no tabulation in 1941 as a measure of war economy. Hence we have no figures regarding the distribution of Assam's population according to language for 1941.

There is a striking increase in the percentage of the people who speak Assamese in 1951 (56.7) over those of 1931, which was only 31.4 per cent; there is an equally striking decrease in the percentage of people speaking Bengali in 1951 which is only 16.5 against 26.8 per cent in 1931. With the solitary exception of Assamese, every single language or language group in Assam shows a decline in the percentage of people speaking the same. All this decline has gone to swell the percentage of the people speaking Assamese in 1951. The figures do not fail to reflect the aggressive linguistic nationalism now prevailing in Assam, coupled with the desire of many persons among the Muslims as well as tea garden labour immigrants to adopt Assamese as their mother-tongue in the State of their adoption. It is not unlikely that some amongst the persons who have returned their mother-tongue as Assamese have done so from devious motives, even through their knowledge of Assamese may not amount to much. The phenomenon is also coupled with the genuine increase in the number of people speaking Assamese with the introduction of more schools in tea garden areas in the Assam Valley where the medium of instruction is naturally Assamese. These factors partially account for the decline in the percentage of people speaking Hindi which has fallen from 7.6 per cent in 1931 to 3.8 in 1951.

The accuracy of language statistics in Assam has suffered to a certain extent on account of the census of indigenous persons of Assam and their land holdings being taken along with the main population census. An indigenous person in Assam was defined as a person belonging to the State of Assam and speaking the Assamese language or any tribal dialect of Assam, or in the case of Cachar, the language of the region. This definition gave rise to some apprehension among some sections of the people of Goalpara and Cachar whereas it was vehemently resented by certain other sections of the people in the Assam Valley. This was due to the clarification given by the State Government that indigenous persons will not merely include persons who speak Assamese at home. The words "at home" were deliberately omitted by the State Government, to expand the scope of the definition. All assurances to the effect that the collection of these statistics will not be a bar to any rights of any

citizen or national of India failed to assuage this apprehension or resentment. On top of it all, some people in Goalpara insisted on returning their mother-tongue as Goalparia. I pointed out that on this analogy some people in Kamrup may insist on returning their language as Kamrupi and those in Nowgong as Nowgongian and that the census cannot take cognisance of such idiosyncracies. When some of them insisted on recording their mother-tongue as Goalparia inspite of the explanation, the Census staff had no option except to record the answers exactly as given by the citizens. As a result 4,088 persons (2,562 males and 1,526 females) returned their mother-tongue as Goalparia. There being no such language in existence, these persons were included under Assamese as directed by the Registrar General, after consulting the State Government.

### Bilingualism

6. The entries regarding bilingualism related to an Indian language used in daily or domestic life and not merely to one's ability to speak it. Bilingualism is partly due to the necessity of using a regional language by immigrants as a means of communication and partly due to the co-existence of more than one regional language.

7. With a view to reduce the volume of the Bilingualism Table, the statistics have been shown by family groups except Assamese, Hindi, Bengali, Manipuri and Tripura, fuller details being given in the District Census Handbooks. The following statement shows the number of persons (including Displaced Persons) who were recorded as bilingual in the 1951 Census :—

TABLE D  
Bilingualism in Assam, Manipur and Tripura

Language	No. of persons speaking the language as a mother-tongue	No. of persons returned as bilingual in the language at the 1951 Census
<b>ASSAM</b>		
Assamese ..	4,972,493	487,028
Bengali ..	1,719,155	381,880
Hindi ..	335,688	149,130
Austic Family ..	491,991	126,570
Tibeto-Chinese Family ..	1,159,210	283,428
Dravidian Family ..	81,328	21,267
Indo-European Family..	281,042	156,653
Unclassified Languages..	2,700	1,377
Total ..	9,043,707	1,607,333

Language	No. of persons speaking the language as a mother-tongue	No. of persons returned as bilingual in the language at the 1951 Census
<b>MANIPUR</b>		
Assamese ..	245	53
Bengali ..	2,859	431
Hindi ..	950	219
Manipuri ..	377,191	4,666
Austrie Family ..	519	11
Tibeto-Chinese Family ..	179,275	9,649
Dravidian Family ..	46	4
Indo-European Family	3,203	1,068
Unclassified Languages ..	13,347	413
Total ..	577,635	16,514
<b>TRIPURA</b>		
Tripura ..	129,379	49,760
Assamese ..	263	175
Bengali ..	374,258	15,759
Hindi ..	37,972	14,196
Austrie Family ..	3,468	1,949
Tibeto-Chinese Family ..	76,032	28,169
Dravidian Family ..	4,058	2,334
Indo-European Family	11,480	7,765
Unclassified Languages ..	2,119	475
Total ..	639,029	120,582

8. The following interesting remarks are quoted from Dr. Hutton's observation on

bilingualism of Tibeto-Burmese Group of Assam in the Census Report of India, 1931 :—

“These languages are however so variable and multiform that each differs totally from its neighbour as a spoken vernacular, and there are cases in the Naga Hills where the mother-tongues of opposite sides of the village street are so different that, although one is always known to both sides, the one in lesser use may be incomprehensible across the road, and it is common to hear two people colloquing while answering each in his own tongue the questions of his *vis-a-vis* asked in the other's. There are small villages where the children grow up fluent in five languages each of which would puzzle a Dutchman to learn a little of in two years, and in the State of Manipur the majority of male tribesmen are bilingual in their own tongues and Manipuri, while a combined knowledge of some Kuki language, some Naga language and the Manipuri language must be extremely frequent. The incredible rapidity with which a Naga or Kuki interpreter acquires an additional language with the most limited opportunity for doing so has to be experienced to be appreciated, and there are some villages which in addition to real languages compose jargons and counter-jargons of their own in order to be able to chatter incomprehensibly in the presence of others, particularly when discussing a proposition of purchase, sale or barter.”

## APPENDIX 10

# SPECIAL GROUPS

For the sake of completeness in the presentation of all data collected at the 1951 Census, I give below statistics about the special groups.

TABLE A  
Backward Classes in Assam, Manipur and Tripura

State and Natural Division					Backward Classes	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Non-backward population
Assam	..	..	..	..	1,884,234	424,044	1,735,245	4,999,129
Assam Plains	..	..	..	..	1,860,252	418,755	695,525	4,829,163
Assam Hills	..	..	..	..	23,982	5,289	1,038,720	162,966
Manipur	..	..	..	..	..	..	194,239	383,396
Tripura	..	..	..	..	30,349	36,371	192,293	369,922

It is thus clear that 9 persons out of every 20 in Assam belong to Special Groups whose existence is specifically recognised and whose rights and privileges specially safeguarded in our Constitution. 55%, *i.e.*, 11 out of every 20 persons are socially and economically more advanced than these special groups. Of course, where the entire State itself is relatively very backward at least economically, the difference between the backward and the non-backward population in Assam is merely a matter of some slight degree rather than of a fundamental kind. It must be clearly understood that these figures of backward classes are to be treated as **entirely provisional**. They have been compiled and given for the use of the Backward Class Commission, which is soon to be appointed. Thereafter, the Commission will determine whether the existing list of backward classes in

Assam should be retained as it is or some omissions from it or some additions to it should take place. Only 4.7% of the population belongs to the Scheduled Castes but as much as 20.8%, *i.e.*, over one-fifth of the entire population belongs to the backward classes. A similar proportion, *viz.*, 19.2% belongs to the Scheduled Tribes.

Manipur, in a social sense is far more advanced, there being no population which had been returned either as backward or scheduled caste. Yet we have here as many as 194,239 persons belonging to the schedule tribes. In Tripura scheduled castes and backward classes number only 46 and 30 thousand respectively. Out of the remaining, 370 thousand are non-backward classes, with 192 thousand belonging to the scheduled tribes.



Below is an extract from instructions to enumerators about these special groups.

“Part (C)—Special Groups.—This question relates only to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes given in Appendix III at the end. Ask everyone his caste or tribe; if it is Anglo-Indian, or one of those specified in these lists, write it in full. In all other cases write X.

If any of the castes has assumed a new name write its old name in bracket, *e.g.*, Kshatriya (Manipuri).

If a person belongs to any of these listed castes or tribes, write his religion (whether Hindu or Christian). For instance, if an Angami Naga returns himself as Christian, write C against Q. 2(b) and Angami against Q. 2(c). If he has any objection to recording his tribe write ‘None’ against Q. 2(c).”

According to the Constitution Scheduled Castes Order, 1950, the following 15 castes were declared as Scheduled throughout the State.

#### Scheduled Castes in Assam

1. Bansphor.
2. Bhunmali or Mali.
3. Britial-Bania or Bania.
4. Dhupi or Dhobi.
5. Dugla or Dholi.
6. Hira.
7. Jhalo or Malo.
8. Kaibartta or Jaliya.
9. Lalbegi.
10. Mahara.
11. Mehtar or Bhang.
12. Muchi.
13. Namasudra.
14. Patni.
15. Sutradhar.

According to the Constitution Scheduled Tribes Order, 1950, the following tribes were declared as scheduled so far as members thereof reside in the localities specified in relation to them.

P/42—53.

#### Scheduled Tribes in Assam

1. In the Autonomous Districts :—
  1. Dimasa (Kachari).
  2. Garo.
  3. Hajong.
  4. Khasi and Jaintia.
  5. Any Kuki tribes.
  6. Lakher.
  7. Any Lushai (Mizo) tribes.
  8. Mikir.
  9. Any Naga tribes.
  10. Synteng.
2. In the Tribal Areas other than the Autonomous Districts :—
  1. Abor.
  2. Aka.
  3. Apatani.
  4. Dafla.
  5. Galong.
  6. Khampti.
  7. Mishmi.
  8. Any Naga tribes.
  9. Singpho.
  10. Momba.
  11. Sherdukpen.
3. In the State of Assam excluding the Tribal Areas :—
  1. Boro-Borokachari.
  2. Deori.
  3. Hojai.
  4. Kachari.
  5. Lalung.
  6. Mech.
  7. Miri.
  8. Rabha.

For the guidance of the Census Staff, the following classes were declared Backward by the State Government.

#### Backward Classes in Assam

1. Chutiya.
2. Mahisya Das.
3. Baroi.
4. Manipuri.
5. Sut or Boria.
6. Kupadhar.
7. Chandra Baidya.

8. Tea Gardens Tribes\*.
9. Tanripal.
10. Moran and Mataks.
11. Ahom.
12. Rajbansi.
13. Yogi (Nath) in Cachar, only.
14. Sudra Das, or Dey.
15. Saloi.
16. Kumar.
17. Teli.
18. Ganak in Cachar only.

One or two minor changes were made in this list e.g. separating Boria from Sut in item 5 of

the above list. These were duly given effect to and the numbers as finally given out by the Census duly reflect these last-minute changes.

#### Population of Individual Tribes in Assam

According to the general instruction issued by the Registrar General we would have normally before us only the total figures of Scheduled Tribes as a whole. However, in view of the frequent use and requests for the figures of individual tribes, a special tabulation was undertaken as desired by the Government of Assam to achieve this purpose. The figures are given below in Table B.

TABLE B—Contd.

#### Population of Individual Tribes in Assam

Serial No.	Tribe and locality where chiefly found	1951 Census		
		Total	Males	Females
1	Kachari.—Brahmaputra Valley and North Cachar Hills	271,524	141,008	130,516
2	Garó.—Garó Hills and Goalpara	234,799	131,537	113,262
3	Khasi.—Khasi and Jainta Hills	228,413	114,090	114,323
4	Boro.	188,499	99,215	89,284
4a	Boro.—Kachari	1,666	733	933
5	Lushai.—Lushai Hills	156,372	76,653	79,719
6	Mikir.—Nowgong and Sibsagar	152,537	80,373	72,164
7	Miri.—Lakhimpur and Sibsagar	115,314	159,622	55,694
8	Rabha.—Garó Hills, Goalpara and Kamrup	88,748	45,430	43,318

\* Any person belonging to the following tribes, found mainly among tea garden or ex-tea garden population was classed as belonging to tea garden tribes:—

(a) Gonds—Includes such names as Agaria, Dhanwar, Koyi (Koya), Kawar (Kanwar, Kaur), Pardhan and Paroja (Parja). They come mostly from Madhya Pradesh and the States of Raigarh and Surguja (recruiting agencies of Mandla, Raipur, Bilaspur, Jubbulpur and Daltonganj). Their mother-tongue should be recorded as Gondi, if they speak Gondi including the dialects Koi (Koya), Parji and Parja.

(b) Mundas—Includes such names as Birhor, Binjhar, Gadaba (Gadba), Ho, Kol, Kharia, Korku Korwa and Turi. They come mostly from Chota Nagpur and Agency area of Orissa (recruiting agencies chiefly Ranchi, Chaibassa, Samalpur). Their mother tongue should be recorded as Mundari, if they speak Mundari or any of its branches and dialects, Kharia, Korku, Kherwari, Birhar, Korwa, Turi and Ho.

(c) Khonds—Includes names like Jatapu and Kondadora. They come from the Agency area of Orissa and Madras (recruiting agencies Koraput, Sambalpur and Berhampore-Ganjam). Their mother-tongue will be

recorded as Khond if they still speak Khond or its dialects Dora and Kui.

(d) Oraons—Includes Kurukh. They come from Madhya Pradesh and Orissa (recruiting agencies Daltonganj, Chaibassa and Ranchi.) Their mother tongue should be recorded as Oraon if they still speak Kurukh or Oraon.

(e) Santhals—They come mostly from Santhal Parganas (recruiting agency Dumka) and their mother-tongue should be recorded as Santhali if they still it.

(f) Savaras—An important hill tribe in the Ganjam district of Orissa and the Vizagapatam district of Madras (recruiting agency Berhampur-Ganjam) and their mother-tongue should be recorded as Savara if they still speak it.

(g) Pans—Includes such names as Chik-Baraik, Ganda and Tanti the last named being related to the Mahars of Madhya Pradesh. Under these and other names they come from the north of Orissa, the southern and western parts of Chota Nagpur and from Madhya Pradesh (recruiting agencies Ranchi, Sambalpur and Raipur). They speak variants of Hindi or Oriya according to their residence.

TABLE B  
Population of Individual Tribes in Assam

Serial No.	Tribe and locality where chiefly found	1951 Census		
		Total	Males	Females
9	Lalung.—Nowgong	.. 52,332	26,515	25,817
10	Ao.—Naga Hills	.. 48,711	23,248	25,465
11	Sema.—Naga Hills	.. 39,632	19,042	20,590
12	Synteng.—Khasi and Jaintia Hills	.. 29,415	19,204	10,211
12a	Jaintia	.. 23,899	7,875	16,024
13	Angami.—Naga Hills	.. 28,311	15,037	13,274
14	Lhota.—Naga Hills	.. 22,407	11,107	11,300
15	Chakma.	.. 15,897	7,289	8,608
16	Pnar.	.. 14,760	4,130	10,630
17	Sangtam.	.. 11,323	5,412	5,911
18	Naga.—Naga Hills	.. 10,989	6,045	4,944
19	Hajong	.. 10,809	5,409	5,400
20	Lakher	.. 8,878	5,215	3,663
21	Konyak.—Naga Hills	.. 8,816	4,358	4,458
22	Dimasa.	.. 8,207	4,495	3,712
23	Powi	.. 8,193	4,036	4,157
24	Kuki.—North Cachar Hills and Naga Hills	.. 7,428	3,775	3,653
25	Paite	.. 3,631	2,030	1,601
26	Rengma.—Naga Hills	.. 5,291	2,531	2,761
27	Boro.—Kachari	.. 1,566	633	933
28	Mizo	.. 947	829	118

It is not possible to bring out the variation in population of individual tribes in the last decade in many cases, because the 1941 figures of individual tribes include not only those living in Assam but also in Manipur. As the figures are strictly non-comparable, they have not been included here lest they may lead the unwary reader

astray. Those who are so inclined may however look up Imperial Table XIV on page 29 of **Census of India 1941 Vol. IX Assam K. W. P. Marar Tables**. The districtwise distribution of these and other individual tribes is given in the **Subsidiary Tables Volume, i.e., Part I-B of this Report**.

## APPENDIX 11

# NOTE ON THE LAND SYSTEM OF ASSAM \*

After the partition of India the major portion of the Sylhet district formed a part of East Pakistan, the truncated portion of Karimgani Sub-division being retained and tagged on to the district of Cachar in Assam.

2. Broadly speaking, there are two classes of land, namely (i) permanently settled estates confined to the districts of Sylhet (now forming a part of Cachar), Goalpara and two villages of Garo Hills and (ii) temporarily settled estates in the rest of the State. In the following paragraphs wherever Sylhet is mentioned it should be taken to mean only that portion of Sylhet which now forms a part of Cachar.

3. Area under different classes :—The area figures have been compiled from the Land Revenue Administration Report for the year 1949-50. In the case of Hills districts the area figures as given in the Report represent only those areas which were known in pre-Independence days as "British Villages". As complete figures are not available, the statement has been confined to the seven Plains districts of Assam.

4. The existing records do not show the number of villages classified according to the different classes of lands. Hence, the number of villages as found according to the 1951 Census have been shown under the two broad categories of permanently settled and temporarily settled estates. The former contains scattered strips of khas lands (temporarily settled) and the latter, Lakhiraj estates which are revenue free.

5. The following extract from the Assam Land Revenue Manual explains the character and privilege of different tenures of land prevalent in Assam.

Extract from the Assam Land Revenue Manual, Volume I, Sixth Edition.

### ESTATES IN LAND

In Assam, the different kinds of estates or interests in land may be considered under the following heads.

- (1) The Lakhiraj estates and estates held in fee-simple, with estates under the Special Waste Land Rules.
- (2) The permanently-settled estates of Sylhet and Goalpara.
- (3) Temporarily-settled estates other than town lands held direct from Government on periodic lease. These cover the following different classes of estates now existing in the province :—
  - (a) Revenue-paying estates in all districts, taken up under the Special Waste Land Rules already referred to, or under Section I of the Settlement Rules of the Province prior to 1929 and held at favourable rates.
  - (b) Ilam and modified Ilam estates of Sylhet.

\* I am grateful to Shri S. C. Sarma, my successor for kindly preparing this note. (R.B.V.)

- (c) All other estates in Sylhet settled with the Ilam estates.
  - (d) All estates settled in Sylhet and Cachar for a term of years under the Settlement Rules of the Province.
  - (e) The nisf-khiraj or half revenue-paying estates of Assam Proper.
  - (f) The khiraj, or full-revenue paying estates of Assam Proper and Goalpara held under periodic lease.
- (4) Temporarily-settled khiraj estates held direct from Government on annual lease.

In the earlier days of the Administration the owners of each of these classes of estates used to be loosely described as "proprietors" of their lands, or as having "proprietary rights"; but all that was meant by these expressions was that those who held land under temporary settlement from Government, whether under annual or periodic lease, even when the lease did not expressly confer a permanent, heritable and transferable interest, did in practice enjoy, without interference from Government, the right of transferring such property in the land as their leases conferred upon them. In Bengal we know that, in effecting the permanent settlement, Lord Cornwallis was directed to have regard to the laws and customs of India and to the local system of land rights in Bengal\*. In Assam, on the other hand, with the exception of Sylhet Proper and the permanently-settled tracts of the district of Goalpara, the successive conquest of districts or portions of districts, including the hills districts†, has been held to have extinguished all private rights in land previously existing, unless expressly recognised by the British Government either by standing executive orders or legal enactment, and it is important to note that, except in reserved forests, public roads, embankments, etc., and military cantonments and civil stations, the Land and Revenue Regulation recognises no private or public rights of any description in land in Assam other than the following:—

- (1) The rights of proprietors, land-holders, and settlement-holders other than land-holders, and other rights acquired in the manner provided by the Regulation.

\* *Vide* page 26 of Sir W. Hunter's "Bengal MS. Records".

† *Vide* Foreign Department letter No. 223-E., dated the 28th January, 1890.

- (2) Rights legally derived from any rights mentioned under §.
- (3) Rights acquired under Section 26 and 27 of the Limitation Act, 1877§.
- (4) Rights acquired by tenants under the Rent Law in force in the Province.

The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, in fact, for the first time formally defined the nature and limit of the "property" or "estate" (status), or proprietary rights" of owners of each of the above-mentioned classes of estates, or, as they are some times called, "tenures¶."

Both the lakhirajdar and the owner of a permanently settled estate are, for the purposes of the Regulation, called "proprietors", but this does not necessarily mean that the property of the lakhirajdar in his lands is the same as that of the owner of a permanently-settled estate. The estate of the lakhirajdar or fee simple owner is the highest estate in land that exists in Assam. It has, as pointed out by Field in his Introduction to the Bengal Regulations, all the advantages of a permanently-settled estate with the additional one that it pays no revenue to Government. The owner can create incumbrances which cannot be avoided, even though the estate be brought to sale on account of any demand realisable by law as an arrear of land revenue. The estate is heritable and transferable, provided the lakhirajdar is the legal owner and not only a trustee, e.g., a temple sebait or dalai. His power however to enhance the rents of his tenants is in Goalpara and Sylhet limited by law‡.

#### § New Act IX of 1908.

¶ In Assam all revenue-paying lands held direct from Government and all lakhiraj or revenue-free lands are in the Land and Revenue Regulation called "estates" [*vide* Section 3(b), of the Regulation]. In official correspondence an estate is often called a "tenure", meaning the same thing *viz* an interest or status in land. In Bengal the word "tenure" has often a special meaning distinct from an "estate", e.g., *vide* definitions in Act VII(B.C.) of 1868, and in the Bengal Tenancy Act VIII of 1885.

‡ In Sylhet Act VIII of 1869 is in force. In Goalpara Assam Act I of 1929, regulates tenancy in permanently-settled estates, and Act VIII of 1869 regulates it in the temporarily-settled areas. There is no special Rent Law in force in the other districts of the province.

The property of the owner of a permanently-settled estate is inferior to that of the lakhirajdar, inasmuch as he is liable to Government for the payment of a fixed amount of revenue, on failure to pay which his estate may be put up to sale for realisation of arrears of revenue; and, if sold, it is sold free of all incumbrances previously created thereon by any other person than the purchaser, subject to certain exceptions\*. The owner's property in a permanently-settled estate is heritable and transferable in Assam, as it is in Bengal; he can transfer it by sale, mortgage, gift, or bequest and grant leases for the whole or any portion of it for a term of years, or in perpetuity; *patni* and *istimrari* tenures created by owners of permanently-settled estates are instances of such leases, through *patnis* are only known in the district of Sylhet, where the *Patni Sale Law*†, is in force. His power, however, to enhance the rent of his tenants is, as in the case of the lakhirajdar, limited by law. It is important to note that the owner of a permanently-settled estate has the right of mining and fishing, and also other incorporeal rights included in his estate. It will thus be seen that, although "absolute property" in land is a thing unknown in English Law, and, as pointed out by the High Court in the great Rent Case decided in 1865, the Bengal Regulations of 1793, from which the owners of permanently-settled estates in Assam derive their rights, teem with provisions quite incompatible with any notion of his having absolute rights, still, for all practical purposes, so long as he pays the Government revenue and such cesses as may be legally assessed on his land and conforms to the provisions of the Rent Law, he is absolute owner of his land, and can dispose of it as he pleases. In the Goalpara district the owner of a permanently-settled estate is generally called a *zamindar*‡, and is a mere rent-receiver, having leased all the lands of his estate either in perpetuity, or for a term of years, to tenants, who may, or may not, be the actual

cultivators. In Sylhet, the larger holders of permanently-settled lands who similarly sublet their lands are generally called *zamindars* and *talukdars*, and the smaller holders, who for the most part cultivate their own holdings, are called *mirasdars*—a term implying that the holdings are regarded by the people as heritable and permanent.

The owners of all temporarily-settled estates settled for terms of not less than ten years are, under the Land and Revenue Regulation, styled "land-holders" to distinguish them from the owners of revenue-free and permanently-settled estates. These also have a permanent, heritable and transferable property in their lands, called in the Regulation a "right of use and occupancy". This property however, is inferior to that of the owner of a permanently-settled estate, in that the settlement is made for a term of years only, after which the revenue may be enhanced on re-settlement. In the case of this class of estates, the Government further reserves in its favour all quarries and mines, minerals and mineral oils, and all buried treasure; and lastly, the land-holder loses his rights unless he complies with the condition of the lease which has been issued to him by Government. A land-holder has a right of re-settlement on the expiry of his lease, subject to the condition that he accepts the terms of settlement offered to him§. If he refuses the settlement offered, he does not altogether lose his rights, but they are temporarily suspended for the period of the re-settlement, which may be made with any other person who may come forward and accept settlement. An important right conceded to all land-holders is that of resigning their holdings at any time during the term of a settlement on giving due notice. If, however, a land-holder resigns, he loses all his rights in the land resigned§.

The fourth class of estate mentioned above is the estate of the settlement-holder of *khiraj*, or full-revenue-paying land, which is held direct from Government under annual lease. Such settlement-holders are at present confined mainly to Assam proper and the Eastern Duars in the district of Goalpara. nearly all temporarily-settled

\* *Vide* Section 71 of the Land and Revenue Regulation.

† Regulation VIII of 1819, Act VI of 1853, and Act VIII(B.C.) of 1865.

‡ For the history of the Bengal zamindar, and of the process by which he gradually acquired the rights in land now possessed by him, Baden-Powell's "Land Systems of British India", Field's edition of the Bengal Regulations, and Sir W. Hunter's "Bengal MS. Records" may be referred to.

† *Vide* Land and Revenue Regulation, Section 32(1) and Rule 1(d) of the Settlement Rules.

§ *Vide* Land and Revenue Regulation, Section 34(c) which has been applied to all districts in which the Regulation is in force.

estates in the Surma Valley being held under periodic leases, the exceptions being a few estates held Khas\*, or settled temporarily for special reasons for one year only. The annual settlement-holder has no heritable or transferable property in his land, such a property being expressly denied to him under the terms of his lease†. If his land is taken up for a public purpose, compensation is given to him for the loss or cost of removal of any house he may have been expressly or tacitly allowed by Government to build upon it, and also for the loss of any crops or trees he may have sown or planted, but he cannot claim compensation for the loss of the land itself. If on expiry of the term of settlement, the Government does not require the land for any public purpose, he is ordinarily given re-settlement; three months' notice is required if re-settlement is to be refused. But although Government has not conferred upon the annual settlement-holder the right of transfer and inheritance in respect of his holding, there is no doubt that transfers of such holdings do actually take place. The Government does not concern itself to interfere with this practice except occasionally to prevent land passing into the hands of undesirable persons. Moreover in sparsely-populated tracts, where it is desirable to accept any one as a Government tenant who is willing to clear waste land or to maintain under cultivation land previously cultivated, the Settlement Officer is not required to look further than the actual occupant

or cultivator, whether he is the settlement-holder of the previous year, or his transferee, or heir, or a stranger. Where the previous settlement-holder does not come forward and apply for re-settlement, the Settlement Rules require settlement to be made ordinarily with the person in actual possession. To this extent, therefore, the Government may be said to have always recognised the transferability of annual holdings and, before the Land and Revenue Regulation was passed, there were many who urged that this tacit recognition of transfers by Government amounted to a recognition of a right which should be distinctly conferred on the annual settlement-holder in the Regulation. This view, however was not accepted by the Government of India, and in order to induce cultivators to settle permanently on their lands, more especially in Assam proper where what is called "fluctuating cultivation" prevailed to a very large extent owing to the large areas of unsettled waste available for cultivation in that part of the province, they were told that if they wished to acquire a valuable property in the lands taken up by them of which the Government could not deprive them without payment of compensation, they had to obtain periodic leases. For many years land was so easily available that annual leases were preferred to periodic, but that stage has now passed; periodic leases are eagerly sought after, and annual leases are being reduced.

6. Chapter II of the Land and Revenue Regulation which defines the rights in land of the different classes of owners, is not applicable to civil stations, i.e., to district and sub-divisional headquarters stations. A special form of periodic lease is, however, issued for such lands, which confers a permanent, heritable and transferable interest on the settlement-holder precisely similar to that enjoyed by the land-holder outside the civil station. Town lands are now in existence which are not civil stations, and in these, which are not excluded from the operation of Chapter II of the Regulation, rights of land-holders and settlement-holders can be acquired. Town lands which Government does not desire to alienate, can be settled on a short-term lease for not more than three years which conveys no rights beyond the term of the lease.

### RECORD OF RIGHTS

6.1. Section 40 of the Land and Revenue Regulation requires the Settlement Officer when making

\* "Khas estates" meant originally permanently-settled estates in Bengal which had been sold for arrears of revenue and bought in by Government, who thus became the owner of the estate and settled it temporarily direct with the cultivators or any persons who would come forward and accept settlement. So long as no settlement was effected, the estates were said to be held khas by Government. The expression has also been applied in Sylhet to temporarily-settled estates similarly bought in by Government at sales for arrears, or the settlement of which has been annulled under the provisions of the Land and Revenue Regulation. The expression "Khas lands" has also frequently been used in Sylhet to denote Government waste or lands which have never been settled, and which are, therefore, at the disposal of Government. In no other part of the province are estates bought in by Government, or the settlements of which have been annulled, referred to as khas, nor are unsettled waste lands called khas lands.

† *Vide* Section 11 of the Land and Revenue Regulation and Settlement Rule 1(c).



a settlement of any local area or class of estates to frame for each estate a record-of-rights in the prescribed form. Under rule 60 of the Settlement Rules, the prescribed form is the chitha and jamabandi. In the last two settlements of Cachar, Jaintia and the Ilam lands of Sylhet, all rights and interests in land in temporarily-settled estates including those of the settlement-holder, his sub-tenant and the actual cultivator, were recorded. In Assam Proper the facts of tenancy, rates of rent paid and in some cases the length of tenancy, have also been recorded; but as there is no Tenancy Law in force no rights in land other than those recognised in Chapter II of the Regulation can exist. In Sylhet, there is no reliable register of permanently-settled estates showing the names of existing proprietors, or any record of the area or boundaries of estates. In the circumstances the preparation of record-of-rights is an impossibility without a complete cadastral survey of the district. To ascertain the cost of such a survey and preparation of a record-of-rights, an experimental survey was made of three parganas in 1914-18. It was quickly found that the Land and Revenue Regulation provided insufficient powers for the preparation of a record-of-rights in permanently-settled areas, and the operation was carried out by the application of certain sections of the Bengal Tenancy Act to the area. A proposal to extend operations to the whole district was negatived by the Legislative Council. Similar difficulties were experienced in Goalpara.

#### **Lakhiraj or revenue-free estates**

Lakhiraj estates, which are found in all the plains districts of the province, are lands which were granted revenue-free for religious and other purposes by the previous rules of the country, and which were confirmed by the Special Commissioner appointed under Bengal Regulation II of 1823 to enquire into the validity of such grants. As noticed further on, these enquiries; in Assam proper, extended over several years, and, in confirming these grants, the Special Commissioner appears to have exceeded his instructions. There is no intention, however, of now questioning the validity of his decrees. The number and area of lakhiraj estates in each district are noted below :—

District	Number of estates	Area in acres
Cachar	79	713
Sylhet	1,258	37,563
Goalpara	40	99,055
Kamrup	38	34,060
Darrang	28	5,027
Nowgong	4	1,537
Sibsagar	59	40,849
Lakhimpur	5	1,586
Total :—	1,511	220,390

#### **General character of settlements effected in the Province**

The general character of all settlements effected in Assam of temporarily-settled estates is that which is commonly described as "raiayatwari", in the sense that the principle aimed at is that of dealing direct with the actual occupant and his separate holding without the intervention of any middleman, landlord, or settlement-holder between him and the Government, or joint responsibility of the village or their group of holdings, as is recognised in making settlements in many other parts of India. The land of each field is also separately measured, classified and assessed. It does not, however, follow from this that settlement has always been made with the actual cultivator. In Assam proper, middlemen are rare. The owners of most of the nisf-khiraj estates in this part of the province sublet their lands; khiraj lands are also sublet when the area of the estate is large. After the cadastral survey of the Brahmaputra Valley it was ascertained that about 18 per cent of the settled khiraj area in Kamrup was sublet, while in no other district did the percentage exceed 6 per cent. In Kamrup in 1904-05 the area sublet was reported as 14 per cent. In 1923-27 the area sublet was found to be only 5.15 per cent of the khiraj area. In Sibsaagar, in 1904-05 the percentage was 6.6 per cent of which only 2.5 per cent was at cash rates; in the re-settlement of 1923-27, 2.76 per cent. In Nowgong (1905-09) the percentage was 2.32 per cent; Darrang (1905-09) about 9 per cent; Lakhimpur (1910-12) 5.19 per cent; Cachar (1913-18) 8.8 per cent; the Jaintia Parganas (1914-18) 4.63 per cent. In temporarily-settled areas therefore sub-tenancy is not very common, and does not appear to be increasing. In the case of permanently-settled estates it may also

be said that the settlement is raiyatwari over a large portion of the district of Sylhet, because, the permanent settlement-holder where his estate is small, as the majority of estates are in this district, cultivates his estates; and of all such estates in Goalpara, the settlement is what is known in ordinary official language as a "Zamin-dari settlement", that is to say, the settlement has been made, as the permanent settlement in Bengal was made with a middleman.

6.2. The following extract from the Sample Survey of the Rural Economic Conditions in Sibsagar District, 1952, shows the trend of subletting:—

X X X X X X X X

### LAND TENURE

The system of land tenure as it prevails in the Sibsagar plains is "Ryotawari" where each individual holder of the land is made directly responsible for the payment of land revenue. Under this system land is settled either for special cultivation or for ordinary cultivation. All the lands settled for special cultivation is in the hands of its actual users (tea planters) who hold free simple grants, etc., while the land settled for ordinary cultivation is held directly under the State under three different systems, Lakhiraj Nisf-khiraj, and Khiraj (Periodic Khiraj and annual Khiraj). Lakhiraj means revenue-free estate granted by Assamese Kings for religious, charitable or other purposes and which were confirmed by the Special Commission under Bengal Regulation II of 1828 to enquire in the validity of such grants. Nisf-khiraj or half-revenue paying estate is distinguished from Khiraj or full revenue paying estate, from a special class of tenure which is to be found only in Assam. The Nisf-khiraj-dars were generally the manager of a temple (Dalai) or the highest priest (Gossain) of some religious institution or might be the "Paik" performing special duties in a temple. During the earlier part of the British rule in Assam there was a confusion regarding the revenue assessment. The Nisf-Khirajdars claimed full exemption of revenue on the ground that the lands were granted to them by the Assamese ruler for some religious or charitable purposes or for extraordinary work of their ancestors as officials under the Ahom regime. To clear up the anomalies created by the landed interests dur-

ing the first decade of the British rule in Assam regarding assessment under Lakhiraj and Nisf-Khiraj tenures a decree was passed by the Government in 1871 when the term Nisf-Khiraj was invented for all estates paying half the ordinary revenue rate in order to avoid the confusion caused by the use of the term Lakhiraj which had been applied to them prior to that date. \*The holders of Khiraj land are given settlement extending for a term of years at a time (periodic-khiraj) or from year to year (annual-khiraj). Khiraj land under periodic lease carries with it a permanent heritable and transferable right subject to the payment of land revenue and local rate as fixed at the successive re-settlements, and to all intents and purposes is a permanent piece of property of the holder. Annual lease is granted mostly in fluctuating use for the year only, though the lease is normally renewed except in cases where Government requires the land for some public purpose. Annual lease is granted mostly in fluctuating areas where uninterrupted retention of land is not customary, or in other places where there is no established occupancy or permanent demarcation†.

The areas under each of these tenure systems covered by the sample of villages is shown below:—

TABLE XIX

1. Lakhiraj	4,093.3 Bighas	9.5 per cent.
2. Nisf-khiraj	232.8 Bighas	0.5 per cent.
3. Khiraj (annual)	10,362.6 Bighas	23.9 per cent.
4. Khiraj (periodic)	28,601.7 Bighas	66.1 per cent.
Total		43,290.4 Bighas 100.0 per cent.

### SUBLETTING AND TENANCY

In the Lakhiraj and larger Nisf-khiraj estates owned chiefly by religious-monasteries and priests, practice of subletting lands to tenants is wide spread, the common procedure being to charge Government rates of revenue wherefrom the landlord keeps for himself the entire or part of the revenue which he has not to pay to Government. In our sample of 35 villages one Assamese village and one Miri village are found to be comprised entirely of

\* See Assam Land Revenue Manual, Volume I (6th Edition), Chapter I.

† Report on the Land Revenue Settlement, Sibsagar. (1923-29), paragraph 46.

Lakhiraj lands (owned by the Satradhiker of Auniati Satra) where, excepting for the total area of village no other details of land utilisation<sup>a</sup> are available. Also Nisf-Khiraj land tenure system is found in two villages, both belonging to the Assamese village-group. Generally, Lakhiraj and Nisf-Khiraj estates are found to be located in convenient and established villages and contain some high grade "rupit" lands and "bastis" which have been held by tenants for generations. These tenants are very seldom disturbed in their possession and therefore may be regarded as occupancy right holders as far as their interest in the cultivation of the land is concerned.

Subletting is practised also by the holder of the Khiraj land although in many cases only temporarily. Actual figures on the extent of subletting by Khiraj holders is difficult to obtain as some of the landlords appear to have a conscious motive for suppressing the existence of sub-tenancies in their lands under the apprehension that entries of such figures in the records might lead to trouble over their occupancy rights. An attempt has, however, been made in the enquiry to collect information about the number of tenants and the amount of land rented by them and it is found that in the sample as a whole 8,701.5 bighas of land were sublet out of 43,290.3 bighas under different systems of settle-

ment. This constitutes about 20.1 per cent. How much of this is accounted for by Lakhiraj and Nisf-Khiraj lands is not known. But assuming that the entire area under these two categories are sublet, the percentage of sublet area in the Khiraj land comes out as 11.2 per cent. This may be compared with the district percentage of sublet Khiraj land during the last resettlement which was only 2.76 per cent. Thus sub-tenancy in the district is gathering strength. As a rule whenever the holder of the Khiraj land happens to be averse to or inexperienced in cultivation or confines his interest in the land only to drawing the utmost rent (in cash or kind), the practice of letting whole or part of his land to tenant cultivators is resorted to. Besides in the good Lakhiraj and Nisf-Khiraj estates particularly a process of sub-infeudation has developed. If the economic rent of the land tends to leave a margin of profit over the fixed Government land-revenue and other outlays, then intermediaries spring up between the right-holders and the actual cultivators. These intermediaries as also the non-cultivating right-holders have constituted a class of parasitic and functionless landlords in our agricultural economy. Of 2,350 families holding land, 192 families belong to the essentially non-cultivating class whose sole interest in the land consists of receiving rents from tenants.

x   x   x   x   x   x   x   x

TABLE A  
Land Tenure System in Assam

	Assam Plains Division.		Cachar.		Goalpara.		Kamrup.	
	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.
I.—Permanently Settled	.. 1,701,627	4,444	182,645	1,023	1,518,982	3,421	..	..
II.—Temporarily Settled	..							
Annually at full rates for ordinary cultivation	.. 1,707,894	..	17,859	..	37,969	..	470,399	..
Annually at full rates for special cultivation	1,243	..	148	..	..	..	..	..
<b>Total Annually Settled</b>	.. 1,709,137	..	18,007	..	37,969	..	470,399	..
Periodically at full rates for cultivation	.. 2,674,541	..	382,903	..	41,434	..	615,325	..
Periodically at full rates for special cultivation	.. 377,304	..	140,851	..	99	..	5,902	..
<b>Total Periodically Settled</b>	.. 3,051,845	..	523,754	..	41,533	..	621,227	..

<sup>a</sup> Report on the Land Revenue Settlement, Sibsagar (1923-29), paragraph 48.

TABLE A—*Contd.*  
Land Tenure System in Assam

	Assam Plains Division.		Cachar.		Goalpara.		Kamrup.	
	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.
Nisf-khiraj one year	.. 6,118	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nisf-khiraj ten years	.. 15,863	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nisf-khiraj thirty years	.. 165,703	..	..	..	..	..	146,332	..
<b>Total Nisf-Khiraj</b>	.. 187,684	..	..	..	..	..	146,332	..
Special Settlements	.. 316,833	..	1,014	..	300,513	..	1,322	..
Town Lands	.. 28,296	..	1,384	..	117	..	4,062	..
<b>Total Temporarily Settled</b>	.. 5,293,795	15,039	544,159	1,639	380,132	727	1,243,342	2,789
III.—Revenue Free (Other than Fee Simple)	.. 182,286	..	1,034	..	99,055	..	33,971	..
IV.—Waste Lands	.. 931,280	..	205,426	..	749	..	24,554	..
<b>Grand Total</b>	.. 8,108,988	19,483	933,264	2,662	1,998,918	4,148	1,301,867	2,789

  

	Darrang.		Nowgong.		Sibsagar.		Lakhimpur.	
	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.	Area in acres.	No. of villages.
I.—Permanently Settled	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
II.—Temporarily Settled	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Annually at full rates for ordinary cultivation	.. 325,704	..	333,660	..	221,349	..	300,954	..
Annually at full rates for special cultivation	.. 111	..	..	..	884	..	100	..
<b>Total Annually Settled</b>	.. 325,815	..	333,660	..	222,233	..	301,054	..
Periodically at full rates for cultivation	.. 369,799	..	342,476	..	588,267	..	334,337	..
Periodically at full rates for special cultivation	.. 35,028	..	4,630	..	101,348	..	89,446	..
<b>Total Periodically Settled</b>	.. 404,827	..	347,106	..	689,615	..	423,783	..
Nisf-khiraj one year	.. ..	..	6,118	..	..	..	..	..
Nisf-khiraj ten years	.. 15,863	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nisf-khiraj thirty years	.. 13,205	..	..	..	4,962	..	1,204	..
<b>Total Nisf-Khiraj</b>	.. 29,068	..	6,118	..	4,962	..	1,204	..
Special Settlements	.. 678	..	2,207	..	1,088	..	10,011	..
Town Lands	.. 1,777	..	2,910	..	3,267	..	14,779	..
<b>Total Temporarily Settled</b>	.. 762,165	2,094	692,001	2,266	921,165	2,812	750,831	2,712
III.—Revenue Free (Other than Fee Simple)	.. 4,101	..	1,645	..	40,894	..	1,586	..
IV.—Waste Lands	.. 188,869	..	45,341	..	235,497	..	230,844	..
<b>Grand Total</b>	.. 955,135	2,094	738,987	2,266	1,197,556	2,812	983,261	2,712

## LAND HOLDINGS OF INDIGENOUS PERSONS

At the first conference of Census Superintendents of all States held in February, 1950, at Delhi, a unanimous decision was arrived at to reduce the total number of Questions from 14 to 13 and leave the scope of one Question to be determined by the State Governments in their discretion. The Governments of all the three States—Assam, Manipur and Tripura decided to utilise this Question for collecting statistics of land held by their indigenous persons. Accordingly this Question was thus framed by the Government of Assam :—

“ Q. 13 Indigenous Persons—

- (a) Are you an indigenous person of Assam?
- (b) If so, state, in the nearest bigha—
  - (i) the land you own;
  - (ii) the land you have rented in cash or kind from others.”

### 2. Instructions to Enumerators :

The following instructions were issued for the guidance of enumerators :—

“ Divide this line of Question 13 in 3 parts by drawing 2 small vertical lines.

A reply to this question should be recorded in 3 compartments. If a person is indigenous in Assam write A in the first compartment. In the second compartment write, in the nearest bigha, the land he owns; and in the third, the land he rents from others in cash or kind.

If he is without any land of either category, write X in the second or third or both the compartments as the case may be. If a person is not indigenous in Assam, write X in all the three compartments.

“ Indigenous person of Assam ” means a person belonging to the State of Assam and speaking the Assamese language or any tribal dialect of Assam, or in the case of Cachar the language of the region.

“ Land owned ” means land held directly under Government on permanent settlement or under periodic, annual or special lease (e.g., Lakhiraj, Nisf-Khiraj, Fee Simple 45 years, 99 years, N.L.R. grant lease and lease for special cultivation). Such land should be included in the second compartment.

“ Land rented ” means the amount of land held by a person under another person (*i.e.*, not directly under the Government), on payment of rent in cash or in kind or on service, under an agreement written or verbal. The person may hold such land for any period from a few months to a number of years, with or without occupancy rights, or on adhi-bhagi or chukti-bhagi terms. Land may be held as *bargadar* on terms of sharing of produce. All such land should be written in the third compartment.

If the land is owned or rented jointly by a whole family, these data should be recorded in the slip of the head of the household only and

should not be repeated in the slips of other members of the household."

The definition of the terms 'land owned' and 'land rented' for Question No. 13 is however different from that adopted for General Tables—B I-III—Economic Series, derived from Question No. 10 (Principal Means of Livelihood) under the head 'Agriculture' which is reproduced below :—

The word 'owned' used in relation to land (for Principal Means of Livelihood under Question No. 10) includes every tenure which involves the right of permanent occupancy of land for purposes of cultivation. Such right should be heritable; it may be, but need not necessarily be also transferable. All Raiyats, Tenants and Iotedars having occupancy rights will be treated as cultivating owners of land.

Annual patta-holders, bargadars, adhiars, ijara-dars and Raiyats, Jotedars or Tenants who have no occupancy rights will be classed as cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned.

The State Governments of Manipur and Tripura also adopted this question with slight modification in the instructions for enumeration with reference to local conditions.

Later on, clarification given by the then Revenue Minister (present Chief Minister), Assam, Shri Bishnu Ram Mehdi, was conveyed to all Charge Superintendents of Dhubri Sub-Division, while I was touring the area, on the eve of the census operations. The definition

of indigenous person for census is "a person who belongs to the State of Assam and speaks Assamese or any other tribal dialect. However, it does not mean only those persons whose mother-tongue is Assamese. Even those whose mother-tongue is not Assamese, but speak Assamese at least as their subsidiary language, will be recorded as indigenous. Inform your Supervisors and enumerators accordingly". The definition was intentionally so worded as not to insist on any one speaking the Assamese language or tribal dialect *at home* or as a mother-tongue, in order to enlarge the number of persons coming within the purview of this definition. Again, when some persons, in the Dhubri Sub-Division of the Goalpara Division, insisted on returning their mother-tongue as Goalparia, such persons were also included under indigenous persons. However, if a person insisted on his mother-tongue to be recorded as Goalparia, even if it was explained to him that there was no such recognised language, his wishes were respected and the language was recorded as Goalparia. Later on, all such persons have been included under Assamese after the tabulation was completed. The total number of such persons was 4,088.

At the tabulation stage the displaced persons by definition were excluded from the scope of the question and further sorting. So also all hills districts and the hill portion of Manipur State, where jhum is practised, were excluded. Hence the figures apply only to the Assam Plains Division.

### 3. Land holdings of indigenous persons according to Livelihood Classes :

TABLE A

#### Land holdings of indigenous persons—Non-Agricultural Classes V, VI, VII and VIII

State	Total Indigenous Population of Non-Agricultural Classes			No. of families owning land (in bighas) under 1, 1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over				No. of families renting land (in bighas) in cash or in kind under 1, 1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over			
	P	M	F	0	1-10	11-30	31 and over	0	1-10	11-30	31 and over
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Assam ..	1,180,090	637,016	543,074	173,191	38,331	9,867	4,216	183,254	36,166	4,153	2,032
Manipur ..	65,898	32,213	33,685	7,718	3,687	1,314	326	12,696	234	94	21
Tripura ..	44,988	23,625	21,363	6,356	1,264	680	126	7,589	665	157	15

TABLE B

## Land holdings of indigenous persons—Cultivating Agricultural Classes I, II and III

State	Total Indigenous Population of Agricultural Classes I, II and III			No. of families owning land (in bighas) under 1, 1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over				No. of families renting land (in bighas) in cash or in kind under 1, 1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over			
	P	M	F	0	1-10	11-30	31 and over	0	1-10	11-30	31 and over
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Assam ..	3,858,312	2,096,417	1,761,895	215,485	261,743	201,169	49,590	458,940	193,387	65,699	9,961
Manipur ..	214,639	104,486	110,153	11,280	21,574	7,400	818	29,028	8,781	3,072	191
Tripura ..	109,593	57,612	51,981	12,701	6,016	1,758	350	15,050	4,470	1,144	161

TABLE C

## Land holdings of indigenous persons—Agricultural Livelihood Class IV

State	Total Indigenous Population of Agricultural Class IV			No. of families owning land (in bighas) under 1, 1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over				No. of families renting land (in bighas) in cash or in kind under 1, 1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over			
	P	M	F	0	1-10	11-30	31 and over	0	1-10	11-30	31 and over
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Assam ..	74,531	35,101	39,430	4,094	6,264	4,223	2,217	12,359	2,629	1,254	556
Manipur ..	11,535	5,164	6,371	220	1,467	724	142	2,438	99	16	..
Tripura ..	8,890	4,066	4,824	113	428	530	414	1,444	22	17	2

Table A above gives the land holdings of indigenous persons so far as they belong to non-agricultural classes V, VI, VII and VIII. Out of a total number of 225,605 families, an overwhelming majority are landless, constituting as they do 77 per cent of the total number of indigenous families under non-agricultural. 17 per cent have land varying from 1 to 10 bighas and only 4 per cent enjoyed land from 11 to 30 bighas. A microscopic fraction, which is below 2 per cent is the only portion of this group which enjoys over 31 bighas of land. 81 per cent of indigenous families under non-agriculture do not rent any land either in cash or in kind, 16 per cent rent land varying 1 to 10 bighas whereas those renting land from 11 to 30 bighas and 31 bighas and over constitute little under (i) 2 and little under (ii) 1 per cent respectively.

Let us now consider Table B which gives the holdings of indigenous persons of agricultural classes of I, II and III. It shows that the number of indigenous families is as much as 727,987. Among them families owning land respectively (i) under 1 bigha, (ii) from 1 to 10 bighas, (iii)

11 to 30 bighas and (iv) 31 bighas and over, constitute 29, 36, 28 and 7 per cent respectively. In these 3 classes, families which do not rent any land at all or rent land below 1 bigha constitute as much as 63 per cent of the total number. Those who rent land (i) 1 to 10 bighas in cash or in kind, (ii) those who rent land from 11 to 30 bighas and (iii) those who rent land 31 bighas and over, constitute 27, 9 and 1 per cent respectively.

We find only 16,798 indigenous families in agricultural livelihood Class IV consisting of non-cultivating owners of land as well as agricultural rent receivers. 25 per cent among them own land less than a bigha, 37 per cent own 1 to 10 bighas, 25 per cent own 11 to 30 bighas and only 13 per cent own 31 bighas and over. In the same Class, nearly three-fourths, i.e., 74 per cent rent land below 1 bigha whereas 16 per cent among them rent land from 1 to 10 bighas. Barely 7 per cent rent land from 11 to 30 bighas whereas an even smaller proportion viz., 3 per cent rent land in cash or in kind exceeding 30 bighas.



TABLE D

## 4. Distribution of land holdings of indigenous persons according to the size of their holdings :

State.	Size of holdings (in bighas) owned by families.	No. of families renting land (in bighas) under 1,1-10, 11-30 and 31 and over.											
		Non-Agricultural Classes.				Cultivating Agricultural Classes.				Non-cultivating owners of land			
		Below 1	1-10	11-30	31 & over.	Below 1	1-10	11-30	31 and over	Below 1	1-10	11-30	31 and over.
Assam	Total	183,254	36,166	4,153	2,032	458,940	193,387	65,699	9,961	12,359	2,629	1,254	556
	.. Below 1	143,983	26,033	1,979	1,196	109,611	66,166	34,564	5,144	1,330	1,624	806	334
	1-10	28,211	8,949	848	323	156,111	85,136	18,444	2,052	5,197	825	201	41
	11-30	7,599	862	1,157	249	150,974	37,729	10,851	1,615	3,892	121	190	20
	31 and over	3,461	322	169	264	42,244	4,356	1,840	1,150	1,940	59	57	161
Manipur	.. Total	12,696	234	94	21	29,028	8,781	3,072	191	2,438	99	16	..
	Below 1	7,611	65	36	6	5,534	3,781	1,905	60	167	46	7	..
	1-10	3,496	154	29	8	16,256	4,362	861	95	1,409	50	8	..
	11-30	1,280	12	17	5	6,496	602	283	19	721	2	1	..
	31 and over	309	3	12	2	742	36	23	17	141	1	..	..
Tripura	.. Total	7,589	665	157	15	15,050	4,470	1,144	161	1,444	22	17	2
	Below 1	5,819	441	92	4	8,772	2,957	875	97	113	..	..	..
	1-10	1,033	184	46	1	4,621	1,183	194	18	396	15	17	..
	11-30	617	36	17	10	1,353	326	74	5	525	5	..	..
	31 and over	120	4	2	..	304	4	1	41	410	2	..	2

We have already seen above separately the distribution of indigenous families owning land varying from 0 to 30 bighas and over, distributed into 4 separate groups. Similarly we have seen their distribution from the point of view of renting land into the same 4 broad categories. Table D given above goes on to give a detailed distribution of indigenous families distributed into the above 4 groups according to the size of their holdings with their further distribution in the same 4 categories; this time according to the size of their renting land. This is given separately for non-agricultural classes, cultivating agricultural classes and non-cultivating owners of land. Let us now review only the most important of the 3 broad livelihood categories, viz., cultivating agricultural classes. There are as many as 459 thousand families who rent land

below 1 bigha. Among these, 110 thousand families own land below 1 bigha, 156 thousand own land from 1-10 bighas, 151 thousand own land from 11-30 bighas and only 42 thousand own land more than 31 bighas. Similarly the number of families in the cultivating agricultural classes renting land from 1-10 bighas total about 193 thousand. Among them 66 thousand own land below 1 bigha, 85 thousand 1-10 bighas, 38 thousand 11-30 bighas and only 4 thousand 31 bighas and above. 66 thousand indigenous families belonging to cultivating agricultural classes rent land varying from 11-30 bighas. Among them, 35 thousand own land below 1 bigha, 18 thousand own 1-10 bighas, 11 thousand own 11-30 bighas and slightly less than 2 thousand families own 31 bighas and above.



